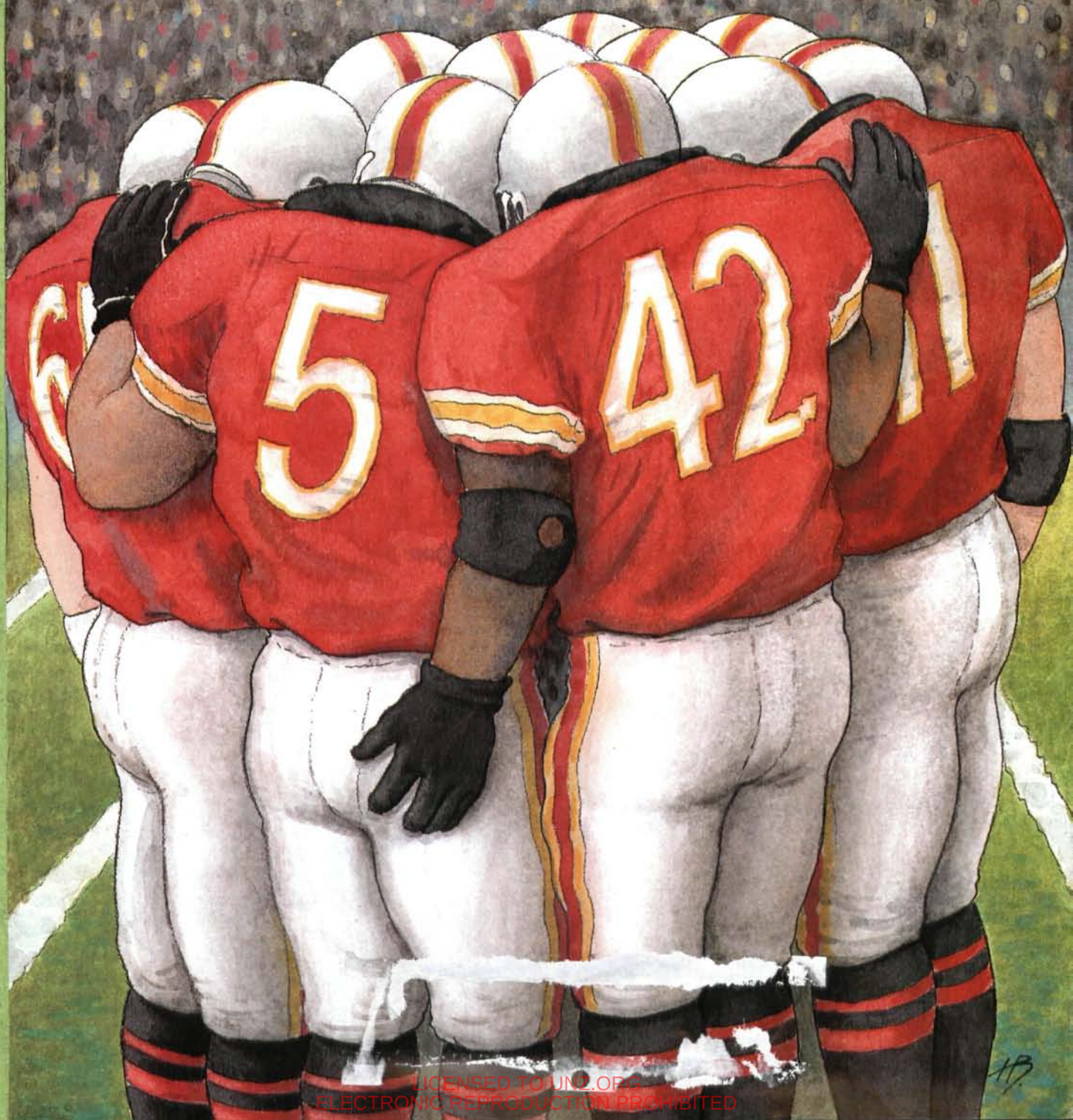


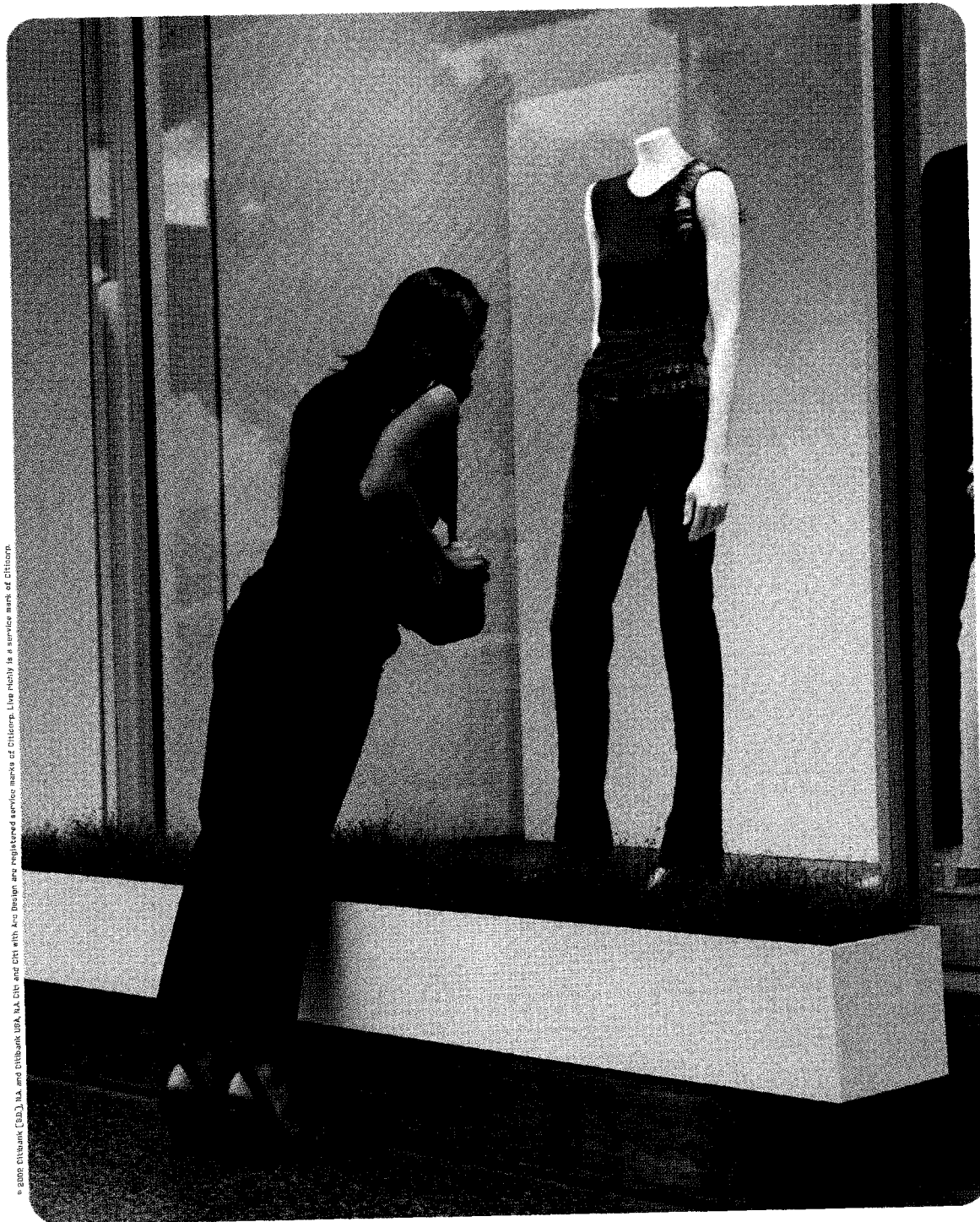
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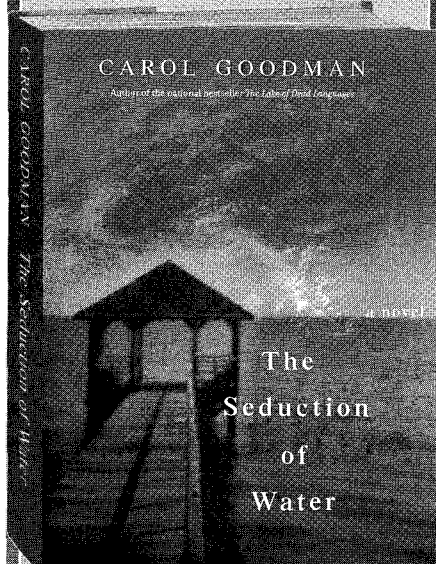
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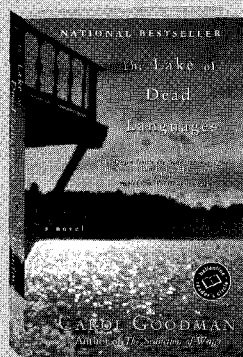
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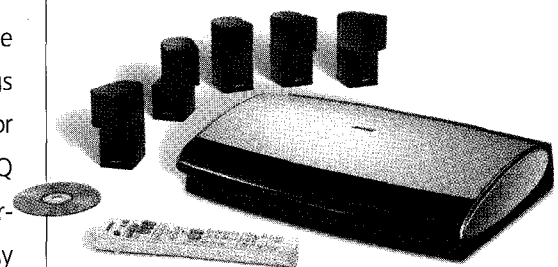


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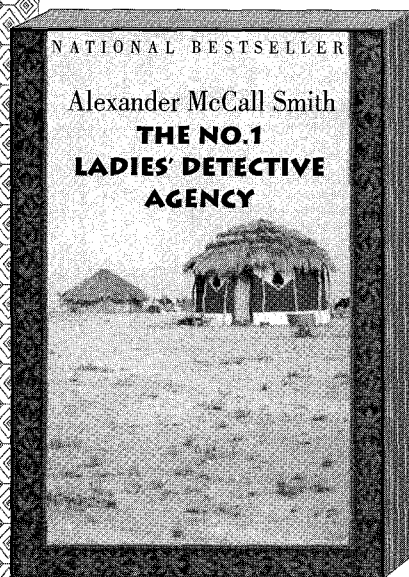
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THE MAIL

JAZZ AND DRUGS

As a jazz musician and educator, I must take issue with John Lanchester's comment, in his review of a book on writing and drugs, that jazz has been enriched by artists' drug dependence ("High Style," January 6th). Heroin was a scourge to the jazz community, killing many of its geniuses before their time, and impairing their performances during their lifetimes. Lanchester calls "Kind of Blue" a classic "heroin" album; in fact, it was made well after Miles Davis and John Coltrane had kicked their addictions, which both of them admitted had been detrimental to their music. Many musicians used drugs as a refuge from the racism, critical neglect, and shady business practices that plagued their lives, rather than in any experimental or utilitarian way. (Miles once said that he never needed drugs for playing music, only for the times he was not playing music.) And Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker, whose drug use Lanchester points to, died young and tragically; drugs influenced their careers by helping to end them. The implication that the rhythmic innovations of jazz were due to musicians' heroin use is simply offensive.

*Taylor Ho Bynum
Middletown, Conn.*

Lanchester supports his curious notion that "the history of dope-fiend jazz musicians is the history of jazz" with a list of musicians who were "on heroin," including Charles Mingus. I can't speak for all of those he named; but, for the record, Mingus, my late husband, was not a heroin addict. When his children were young, he took them on Sunday-morning "junkie walks," as he called them, on the Lower East Side, to dispel any romance that might be associated with drugs. Apparently, that romance has a hold on Lanchester: in addition to indicting jazz, he declares nearly all pop music to have been shaped by drugs. In doing so, he perpetuates myths and clichés and reveals little of the nature of creativity.

*Sue Mingus
New York City*

Lanchester denies that "drugs have given us anything resembling a canon of major writing." Maybe so, but, while he discusses Baudelaire's essay "The Artificial Paradises," he neglects "Les Fleurs du Mal," which is a very major contribution to the French poetic canon. Many of its poems deal with drugs, explicitly or implicitly. "L'invitation au Voyage," for example, an exceptionally beautiful poem, draws on his experience with opium. In the twentieth century, Henri Michaux's terrifying prose poem "L'espace aux Ombres," arguably major, complements his four books about drugs. One could go on: in French, at least, there is simply more major writing about drugs than Lanchester suggests.

*David Ball
Professor Emeritus of French, Smith College
Northampton, Mass.*

THE SEUSS RUSE

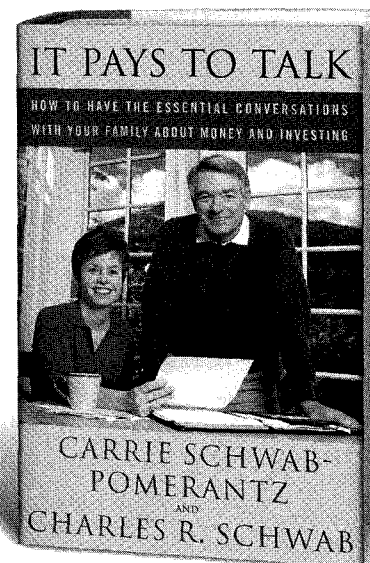
Louis Menand's essay on "The Cat in the Hat" notes that Ted Geisel, who began publishing children's books as Dr. Seuss in 1937—and whose editor I was for the last eleven years of his life—appropriated his mother's maiden name for his famous pseudonym ("Cat People," December 23rd & 30th). But the name's history goes back further. He first used "Seuss" in Dartmouth's undergraduate newspaper in 1925 (when he was banned from extracurricular activities for the parties he had in his room) and added the "Dr." when he returned from Oxford University in 1927 without the doctor of philosophy degree that his father had hoped for. He had resolved to spend his career commenting on life with drawings and verse instead. In the nineteen-thirties, the works he contributed to *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Judge*, and other magazines—all for adults—were all signed Dr. Seuss.

*Janet Schulman
New York City*

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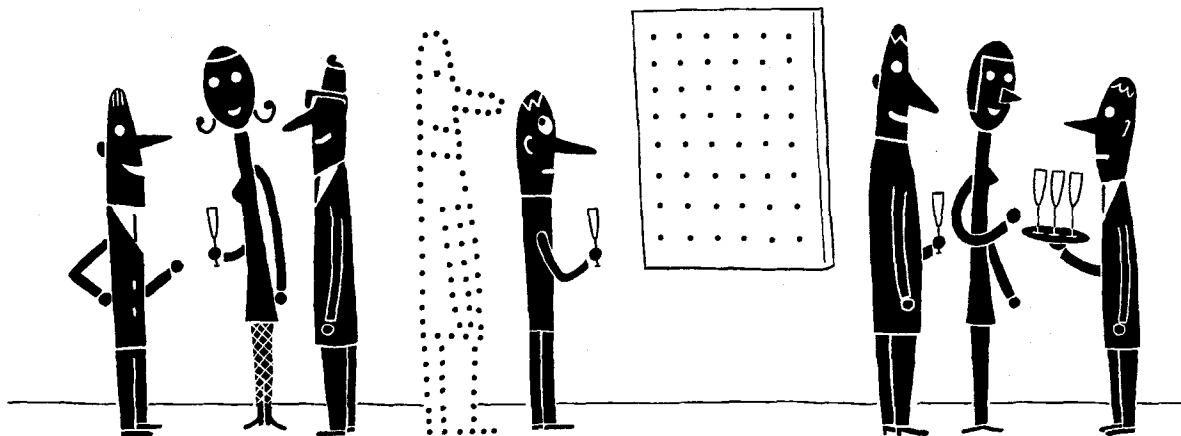
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



THE THEATRE OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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BEDBOUND

The Irish Repertory Theatre presents the American premiere of Enda Walsh's play about a father and his sickly daughter, starring Brian F. O'Byrne, with Jenna Lamia. In previews. Opens Jan. 23 at 7. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

FIFTH OF JULY

Robert Sean Leonard and Parker Posey star in a Signature Theatre Company production of the first play in Lanford Wilson's Talley trilogy, directed by Jo Bonney. In previews. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

KIMBERLY AKIMBO

Manhattan Theatre Club presents a new play by David Lindsay-Abaire, which spins a story around a teen-age girl afflicted with a premature aging condition. Starring Ana Gasteyer and as the girl the versatile sexagenarian Marylouise Burke. Set design by Robert Brill. In previews. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

LITTLE FISH

In a new musical by Michael John LaChiusa ("The Wild Party"), Jennifer Laura Thompson plays a New York woman searching for the right man. Choreographed and directed by Graciela Daniele. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St., west of Eighth Ave. 246-4422.)

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM

Whoopi Goldberg and Charles S. Dutton join forces in a revival of the August Wilson play. Directed by Marion McCClinton. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE WOMEN GENERALS

The Qi Shu Fang Peking Opera Company makes a two-day appearance at the New Victory, delivering the thousand-year-old tale of the warring Yang-family women in traditional Chinese operatic style. Directed by Ding Mei Kui and performed by sixty singers, dancers, acrobats, and musicians, led by Madame Qi Shu Fang. Jan. 24-25 at 7:30. (209 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BETTY RULES

A kinetic alterna-rock musical, directed by Michael Greif ("Rent"), chronicling the nearly two-decade-long career of a real-life girl band called Betty and its members' battle to keep the group

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26	27	28	22	23	24	25

and their sanity intact on the road, at home, on-stage, and even in therapy. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 239-6200.)

LA BOHÈME

Baz Luhrmann has reset Puccini's opera in a cinematic Paris of 1957—on the eve of Godard's "Breathless"—and his *moto*-ready cast of young studs looks the part. Rodolfo and Marcello wear leather jackets and boots, Mimi sports a trench coat, and the red-hot Musetta (Jessica Comeau) has hipster slacks and an Ann-Margret kittenishness. For Musetta's splendid "Quando me'n vo," the ensemble gathers on a silverized Parisian street that looks like a black-and-white Doisneau shot come to life. Rodolfo (David Miller) and Mimi (Ekaterina Solovyeva) have terrific voices, and they're both eye candy: he's a young Belmondo to her Eva Marie Saint. When this Rodolfo first lays eyes on this Mimi, enough heat jumps between the two of them to melt the snowflakes. It makes you want to hop a plane to Paris—the Paris in Baz Luhrmann's mind. Note: Three rotating casts perform the lead roles. (Broadway, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

CLASS MOTHERS OF '68

Here is a show for every woman who has ever sacrificed for her kids, and every kid who should be grateful. Does that leave anyone out? On a clever set (designed by Beowulf Boritt) that shifts, scene by scene, into the living rooms and lives of six different mothers, Priscilla Lopez portrays all the moms—each made fully individual by Lopez's gift for accents and physical expression, each connected by anxiety over her child's impending high-school graduation. To echo the working mother's dilemma: However does she do it? Written by Eric H. Weinberger and directed by Jeremy Dobrish. (Churman, 410 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

COMEDIANS

Trevor Griffiths' 1975 play, revived by the New Group, has two frames. In the outer one—a satisfying tale of aspiration, success, and failure—a group of working-class comics in Manchester hone their craft with an old hand named Eddie Waters whose punch lines have lost their wallop. Waters, played by Jim Dale—who began his career as a comedian in British music halls—shows generous charisma. The students' interrelation with him and with one another is interestingly protective, and when they take the mike their acts

are sometimes uproarious. David Lansbury is likable as George McBrain, a Catholic who jokes about his Protestant wife, and Allan Corduner is unembarrassable as Sammy Samuels, who mines Judaism for jokes. But the play's inner frame is tormentedly earnest. Griffiths asks: Is comedy moral after the Second World War? In their last class with Waters, on a night when a scout will see their acts, the fledgling comics ditch Waters' politically correct teaching and play to the scout—except for the borderline psycho Gethin Price (Raúl Esparza), who radiates pit-bull menace, and delivers a performance-art piece that drips with hatred. "We've got to get deeper than hate," Waters tells Price, in despair. But getting shallower than hate might be funnier. (Samuel Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

CORNER WARS

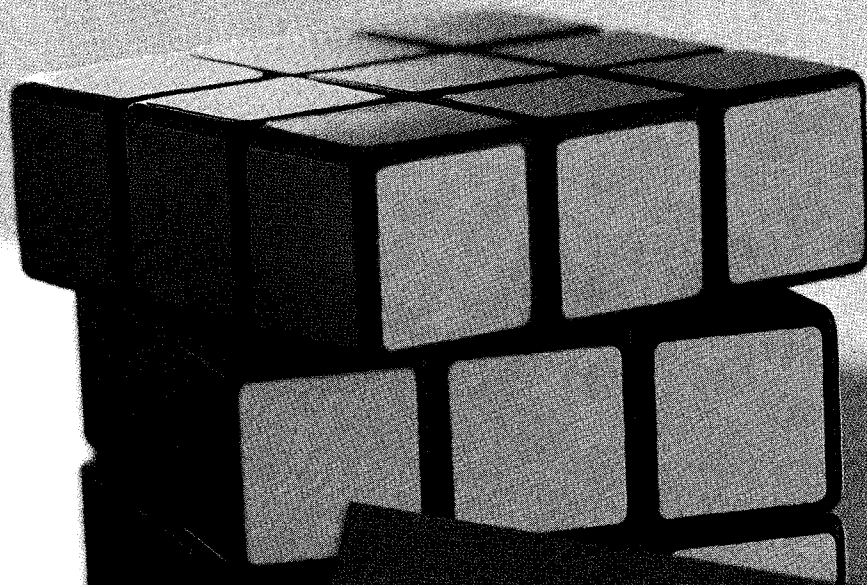
In a strong first effort, the Philadelphia playwright Tim Dowlin creates a "Boy N the Hood"-style drama that humanizes drug dealers instead of glamorizing them. Dowlin's story unfolds predictably but has the power of authenticity. The fresh-faced crack sellers who loiter on a North Philly block—notably the remarkable nineteen-year-old David Shaw, as Kareem, and Omar Evans, as Dex—show the vulnerability that can underlie tough kids' swagger. They don't smoke the dope they sell, they study for the G.E.D. while they sell dime bags, and they use their earnings to pay their grandmothers' bills. But when they kill a rival group of dealers to protect their corner, they demonstrate that an innocent drug dealer is an oxymoron. With a hip-hop score, and salty language, to put it mildly. Directed by Mel Williams. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 2.)

DEBBIE DOES DALLAS

This saucy, tongue-in-cheek musical, choreographed with extreme limberness by Jennifer Cody and directed by Erica Schmidt (who adapted it from the porn film), redefines "physical" comedy. When cheerleading captain Debbie (Jamie Day) is tapped to join the Texas Cowgirls, her squad takes on lucrative after-school jobs to help pay her airfare to Dallas. Played with po-mo brio by a gifted cast, including Day, Mary Catherine Garrison as a jealous fellow-cheerleader, Jeff Skowron as Debbie's quarterback heartthrob, and Ken Barnett as the mustachioed Señor Bradley. (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

DONMAR WAREHOUSE

"Twelfth Night" and "Uncle Vanya" have arrived from London to run in repertory at BAM. The ensemble cast includes Emily Watson, Simon Russell Beale, Helen McCrory, and Mark Strong. Directed by Sam Mendes. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)



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Dan Warmenhoven

Dan Warmenhoven
CEO, Network Appliance, Inc.

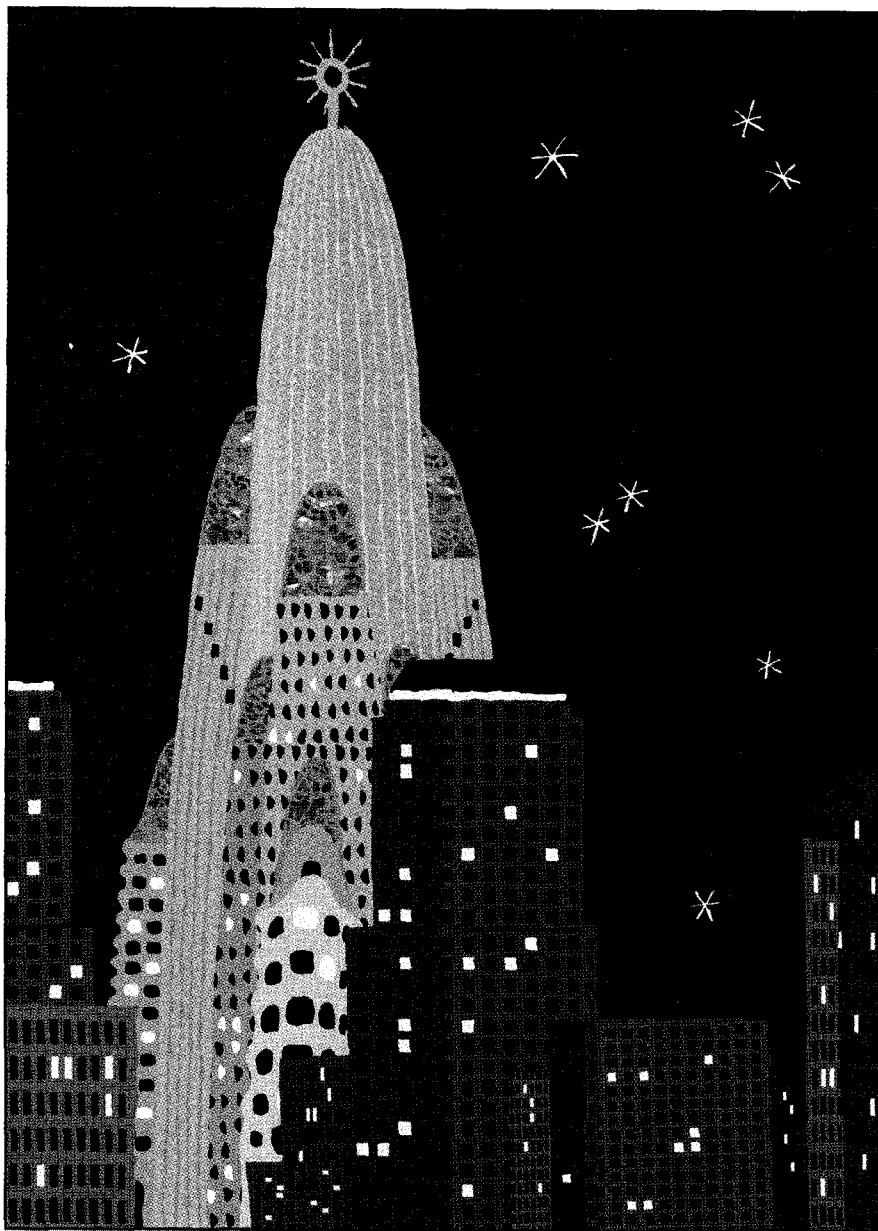
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WORLD VISION *Nearly a century ago, the outlandishly innovative Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí designed a giant hotel for New York City. Where exactly it would have stood is a mystery, but some believe it was destined for lower Manhattan; an upcoming panel of experts from Barcelona examines this proposal (see *Above and Beyond*).*

EINSTEIN'S DREAMS

In this nonlinear one-act play, based on Alan Lightman's surreal novel, a twenty-six-year-old Einstein (Jared Coseglia) stumbles through his past, present, and future as characters from his life—his wife, his sons, his best friend, and a notional daughter named Lieser!—elucidate his theories of space and time, their explanations lit by naked, dangling light bulbs. In the director Rebecca Holderness's poetic, visual dreamscape, time stops, moves forward and backward, and even ceases to exist. (The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 352-3101. Closes Feb. 1.)

FLOWER DRUM SONG

Part fashion show, part night-club act, part hymn to Asian-American diversity, David Henry Hwang's update of the 1958 Rodgers and Hammerstein show, set in San Francisco's Chinatown, works far better than the original. With snazzy direction and choreography by Robert Longbottom and vivacious dancing by Sandra Allen. (11/4/02) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

HANK WILLIAMS: LOST HIGHWAY

To sink any deeper into Hank Williams's blues, you'd need to hop into a pickup truck, drive to

Nashville, and buy a bottle of J.D. In Randal Myler's beguiling musical biography of the hard-drinking, softhearted crooner, Jason Petty retraces Williams's journey from hardscrabble childhood to honky-tonk renown. The audience keeps him company all the while, tapping their toes even when he's so lonesome he could cry. Petty's delivery of Williams's songs sounds astonishingly like the original, and he looks the part, too—as do his pointy-booted backup musicians, the Drifting Cowboys, who jolly up the journey with their ready humor and their dexterous playing of banjo, mandolin, fiddle, harmonica, and spoons. Margaret Bowman shines as the singer's fist-swinging, Bible-thumping mother, Mama Lilly. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 239-6200.)

JOE AND BETTY

Not your typical Catskills play: in Murray Mednick's latest, Annabelle Gurwitch and Joe Diehl play a poor couple with six kids in a small town in the winter of 1951. He's feckless, but it slowly becomes clear that she's the bigger problem—she's descending into a profound depression. As the layers peel away from the banality of the wife's

daily struggle to feed the kids and pay the bills, revealing deeper troubles, Gurwitch's transformation is subtle and compelling. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

JULIUS CAESAR

Karin Coonrod directs a new production of Shakespeare's tragedy for Theatre for a New Audience. With Earl Hindman in the title role and Graham Winton as Mark Antony. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

MEDEA

In her daring modern interpretation of Euripides' drama, well directed by Deborah Warner, Fiona Shaw enters wearing sunglasses, a cardigan sweater, and a tidy summer dress, the picture of almost demure self-control. She has a lithe, muscular body and a sinuous mind to match, but she is a nervy woman pushed to the end of her tether, her mind and heart racing in adrenaline-pumping panic. (12/23 & 30/02) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100. Closes Feb. 22.)

MOVIN' OUT

Twyla Tharp's show about small-town teen-agers coming of age during the Vietnam War era is set to twenty-seven songs by Billy Joel. The band is terrific, and the dancers—above all, John Selya as the hero, Eddie—are positively on fire. (11/4/02) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

PAINTED SNAKE IN A PAINTED CHAIR

Paul Zimet directs a new drama by Ellen Maddow about five friends, whose characters unfold as they gather in a mysterious old house to rid it of errant bees. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

PANIC (HOW TO BE HAPPY)

In "Panic," the avant-garde director Richard Foreman revisits themes he has explored in previous work: the limitations of language, the way that a performance reshapes itself during viewing, and the differences between men and women and how they attempt to connect generally end in some kind of violence. Foreman is a true son of Gertrude Stein, whom he acknowledges as an influence. His actors repeat phrases, lending them a rhetorical rather than a literal meaning. One such phrase is, "Let's all join the misfit club." Another is, "We are here now, inside the behavioral center." Watching the four main performers who make up the nucleus of Foreman's Ontological-Hysterical Theatre—including the beguiling Elina Lowensohn—we know we're in the presence of an ensemble in the best sense of the word. The actors embody separate aspects of Foreman's dense, difficult, often hilarious mind, working together. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE

Frank Gorshin is George Burns in Rupert Holmes's touching one-man tribute to the unsinkable comic and his more-than-a-sidekick wife, Gracie Allen. It's not just a showcase for one man; it's a showcase for an era. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

SHANGHAI MOON

In Charles Busch's swanning romp through thirties film conceits, set in Shanghai in 1931, Busch is Lady Sylvia Allington, a red-headed American temptress whose satin curves and breathy accent (somewhere in between Cary Grant's and Joan Greenwood's) captivate both her credulous, constipated husband, Lord Allington—fabulously rendered by Daniel Gerroll, who later doubles as an opium-smuggling pirate—and General Gong Fei, played by B. D. Wong, who makes his entrance in elaborate military dress, cracking a bullwhip. Every part is actor's taffy, from the Shanghai madam Mrs. Carroll (Becky Ann Baker) to Gong Fei's discarded concubine, Mah Li (Sekiya Billman), to the hunchbacked, long-whiskered temple attendant Dr. Wu, played with relish by Marcy McGuigan. B. T. Whitehill's fanciful set resembles a Red Grooms installation—he makes Gong Fei's palace (the House of Thirty-seven Pansies) purposefully busy with gold meanders, lacquered screens and cabinets, and purple-and-red pillars topped with silvery capitals that, on closer inspection, turn out to be foil turkey pans. As Queen Victoria averred in her review of "The Mikado," "The story is rather silly"—but that doesn't keep it from being wonderful, giddy fun. Directed by Carl Andress. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 633-9632.)

JOSÉ LUIS MERINO

TARTUFFE

In a fresh and frisky production, Henry Goodman brings comic Snagglepuss swagger to the role of Molière's pious hypocrite. Still, he buckles down in all earnestness to the task of seducing his host's wife, played with shrewd levity by the winsome Kathryn Meisle. John Lee Beatty's sumptuous set evokes the Frick museum—incarnated as a busy seventeenth-century stately home, whose fancy-collared residents look like Van Dyck portraits in the flesh. Brian Bedford is effective as the blustering, benighted host, Orgon, and J. Smith-Cameron delights as the tart-tongued lady's maid, Dorine, who never tires of telling the whole household just how foolish they are. A star-crossed young couple, Mariane (Bryce Dallas Howard) and Valère (Jeffrey Carlson), are deliciously fatuous. Under Joe Dowling's brisk direction, Richard Wilbur's masterful translation of the Molière verse speeds around the stage, with nary a couplet landing wrong. (American Airlines, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

Based on Mitch Albom's best-selling book, the play is a love song to a wise old professor who taught an unreflective younger man how to feel. Alvin Epstein plays the mentor—Morrie Schwartz—with wit and heart, and John Tenney is touching as Mitch, the brusque mentee. Directed by David Esbjornson. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

LONG RUNS

ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave. 239-6200.

AIDA

Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

BARTENDERS

John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 206-1515.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES

Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET

Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO

Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)

Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.

DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES

Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. (Closes Jan. 25.)

DE LA GUARDA

Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

DINNER AT EIGHT

Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

(Closes Jan. 26.)

THE EXONERATED

45 Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 307-4100.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:

20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

42ND STREET

Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN

THE CLAIR DE LUNE

Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE GRADUATE

Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

HAIRSPRAY

Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT,

NOW CHANGE

Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

IMAGINARY FRIENDS

Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING

New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

MAMMA MIA!

Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.

MAN OF LA MANCHA

Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

METAMORPHOSES

Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.

LES MISÉRABLES

Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

OKLAHOMA!

Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.

OUR TOWN

Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

PERFECT CRIME

Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS

St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS

John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

RENT

Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

RUSSELL SIMMONS'

DEF POETRY JAM ON BROADWAY

Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.

STOMP

Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE

Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING

St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

URINETOWN

Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET

The season continues with the premiere of a new work choreographed by Peter Martins, in which eight of the company's principal dancers pair off in a Rainbow Room-like night club and dance to

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Photo: Steve J. Sherman

Itzhak Perlman Performs with Students from the Perlman Music Program

Program to include excerpts from

Tchaikovsky: *Serenade for Strings*; Bartok: *Divertimento*;

Bach: *Concerto for Two Violins*; Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*;

Vivaldi: *Concerto for Four Violins, The Four Seasons*



Wednesday, January 22 on **PBS** at 8:00 EST. Check your local listings.

Richard Rodgers standards. "Since he wrote hundreds of songs, I was only sorry that I had to stop at sixteen," Martins says. The title of the dance, "Thou Swell," comes from a refrain in the 1927 Rodgers and Hart musical "A Connecticut Yankee"—about an incorrigible dandy. ♦ Jan. 22 at 8: "Serenade," "Thou Swell," and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." ♦ Jan. 23 at 8: "Serenade," "Thou Swell," and "Mercurial Manoeuvres." ♦ Jan. 24 at 8 (an all-Balanchine program): "Square Dance," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze,'" and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." ♦ Jan. 25 at 2: "Thou Swell," "In the Night," and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." ♦ Jan. 25 at 8: "Serenade," "In the Night," and "Jeu de Cartes." ♦ Jan. 26 at 3: "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Pavane," and "Thou Swell," and "Jeu de Cartes." Jan. 28 at 7:30: "Square Dance," "Haiku," and "Jeu de Cartes." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 870-5570.)

MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY

After a four-year hiatus, the company returns in fine form, having won a protracted legal battle over the rights to Graham's work. In their two-week season at the Joyce, the group revives original costumes, lighting, and sets, and samples seventy years of repertory, from early solos like "Frontier" to austere all-female ensemble dances and the later Greek tragedies and Americana. Even if the histrionics occasionally seem dated, these dancers bring back indelible images of twentieth-century dance, such as the tube dress in "Lamentation" (1930) that appears to swallow the dancer who struggles within it, and the voluminous skirt whose folds the soloist spreads into dragon's wings in "Chronicle" (1936). The wearer of that skirt today, Fang Yi Sheu, is formidable enough to recall the old master herself. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 242-0800. Jan. 22-24 and Jan. 28 at 8 and Jan. 25-26 at 2 and 8. Through Feb. 2.)

"ISADORA... NO APOLOGIES"

Lori Belilove, the founder of the Isadora Duncan Dance Foundation, and Andrew Frank have created a corrective to the teasing, sensationalist treatment the dancer's life usually gets. In a choreographed play written and directed by Frank, Belilove performs Duncan's dances while Hope Garland (as Duncan) and Daryl Boling (as assorted lovers) reenact scenes from her life. The result is a generous narrative that lets Duncan's choreography defend her character. In "Blue Danube," which Duncan performed in Budapest in 1906 (when London theatres would not have her), Belilove's joyous, liberated leaps match the free-flowing silk of her shift (the costumes replicate the originals), but "Les Funerailles" (set to Liszt) and "Mother" (set to Scriabin) evoke Duncan's grief after the accidental death of her children. Shrouded in black, head bowed, Belilove sinks to the floor, her outstretched arms encircling emptiness. With Chopin's Mazurka, though, Duncan's love for life returns, along with a new man, Sergei Esenin, and a thirst for vodka. (Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Jan. 22-25 at 8 and Jan. 26 at 2. Through Feb. 2.)

"TRICK SADDLE"

Jenny Rogers and Clove Galilee lassoed three other strapping female cowpokes to create this butch-rrrl rodeo homage to the mythic American horseman. Galilee's Mabou Mines lineage shows in her simple, playful illusions—a rodeo clown sweeps the spotlight into the dustpan; a woman rolls her shoulders and becomes a snorting bull; an immobile saddle launches its riders into a spine-twisting bucking-bronco ride. The skits and shoot-'em-ups are laced together with a lighthearted water-ballet video by Rogers, who also directs, and live music by Allison Cornell. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Jan. 24-25 at 8:30 and Jan. 26 at 5. Through Feb. 9.)

"BEHOLD BOLD SAM DOG"

Danspace presents an encore performance of Susan Rethorst's sensitive, conceptual evening-length piece, performed by Jodi Melnick, Vicky Shick, and four others. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 23-26 at 8:30.)

"AOW REMIX"

With comic-book flow and pop, Bill (Crutch-Master) Shannon joins Dance Theatre Workshop's "Carnival" series with his street-savvy crew, the

Step Fēnz—masters of one-handed, twirling handstands. Helped by his aerodynamic crutches (he suffers from a congenital hip condition) and his hip-hop dance corps, Shannon achieves impressive feats of movement. DJ Excess spins the music and v.j. Vello Virkhaus projects the digital video in this top-of-the-line urban gallimaufry. (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 21-22 at 7. Through Feb. 9.)

"JENNIE RICHELIEU (OR EATING JALOOKA FRUIT BEFORE IT'S RIPE)"

Mac Wellman's dance-theatre exploration of Henry Darger's outsider art (a production of the Ridge Theatre) returns for twelve performances to the place where it was workshopped, St. Ann's Warehouse. Directed by Bob McGrath, with choreography by David Parsons and costumes by Pilar Limosner. Through Jan. 26. (38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. Jan. 21-24 at 8, Jan. 25 at 7:30, and Jan. 26 at 4.)

"I FORGOT TO BREATHE"

Paula Plessas and Ann Robideaux present a quirky evening in which dancers test the boundaries of the human-insect relationship. In "Zap," Plessas explains, "we have a giant bug zapper on the stage. We're dressed in costumes made of screen, and underneath we have white on, so the neon light from



Henry Goodman and Kathryn Meisle, in the Roundabout's "Tartuffe."

the zapper can make us glow." In "Remap," scientists apply their insect-cloning experiments to themselves. In a non-bug-related new piece, "Mothers and Mallwalkers," the dancers pay tribute to the nineteen-eighties exercise guru Richard Simmons and the women who worshipped him. (Chashama, 135 W. 42nd St. 718-752-1696. Jan. 24-25 at 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

MORCHEEBA

Once slighted as a poor man's Portishead (those mid-nineties progenitors of the atmospheric genre known as trip-hop), this London trio layered the languid ambience of its music with elements of subtle funk, electronica, and acid jazz. Thanks mostly to the supremely cool voice of its front woman, Skye Edwards, the band produced one of the best albums of the last decade, 1998's "Big Calm." They released a follow-up album in 2000 that displayed the growing pains of a maturing band, but last year's release, "Charango," with its guest vocalists (including Lambchop's Kurt Wagner) and Brazilian influences, secured Morcheeba's place in the pantheon of hip coffee-bar bands. With Rosey, an up-and-coming urban soul siren, whose debut album, "Dirty Child," was polished

by Macy Gray's producer, Darryl Swann. (Rose-land, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Jan. 23 at 8.)

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

Lewis Nash, our premier mainstream drummer, obviously has multicultural urges. In addition to including such quality improvisers as the pianist Renee Rosnes and the saxophonist Steve Wilson, Nash has found a place in these concerts for the bagpiper Paddy Keenan. Those who fondly remember the sixties heyday of the jazz bagpiper Rufus Harley are already getting tingles. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 23-25 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

The vocalist and master of the *washint* (bamboo flute) Malaku Gelaw offers a night of traditional Ethiopian music and dance. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. For more information, call 545-7536. Jan. 25 at 8.)

MORRIS ARDOIN & CREOLE TRIO

Old-fashioned American music provided by a band with a pedigree. The leader here is the son of Alphonse (Bois Sec) Ardoin, the legendary ambassador of *la musique créole*, the foot-stomping string-fed precursor to contemporary zydeco. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. For more information, call 685-7597. Jan. 26 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BARBÈS

376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—Jan. 24: Hazmat Modine relies on the call and response of a tuba-and-harmonica front line as it explores a broad range of mostly American twentieth-century music. Jan. 25: An evening of Scottish music in celebration of Robert Burns's birthday.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—The septuagenarian Hubert Sumlin, whose sharp, scratchy guitar helped propel Howlin' Wolf's band for twenty years, recently underwent surgery for lung cancer. On Jan. 22, a host of today's top blues and roots musicians, including Shemekia Copeland, Levon Helm, David Johansen, Vernon Reid, and Marc Ribot, join Sumlin in a benefit to help defray his medical bills. Jan. 24: Hipness may have eluded the sci-fi-obsessed eggheads in Blue Öyster Cult, but that didn't prevent them from scoring a radio classic with the FM-radio standard "(Don't Fear) The Reaper."

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Jan. 21: As the architect behind one of the most influential British bands of the past twenty years, the Smiths, the guitarist **Johnny Marr** paired his chiming, jangly melodicism with the vocalist Morrissey's depressive histrionics, forging a style that's been often copied but never matched. Since disbanding the Smiths, in 1987, Marr has played the hired gun for an impressive roster of artists, but he hasn't led his own band until now. He returns with the Healers, a guitar-based ensemble with Marr on lead vocals. Jan. 24-25: It can't have been a happy year for the **Jon Spencer Blues Explosion**. Just like the Ramones before them, they had to watch a younger, lesser band (Detroit's White Stripes) achieve fame with the blueprint they created a good decade earlier. Nonetheless, the Blues Explosion's signature fusion of bare-knuckle blues and adrenalized punk velocity remains the definitive article. With the slacker troubadour **Elliott Smith** on both dates, the unsung local heroes **Speedball Baby** on opening night, and **Big Lazy** the following evening. Jan. 26: **Stephin Merritt**, **LD Beghtol**, and **Dudley Klute**, billing themselves as the Three Terrors, offer songs about drinking, drugs, and intoxication, accompanied by ukulele, toy piano, musical saw, and other whimsical instruments.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—Jan. 24-25: The Chanteuse Club brings together **Kate Pierson**, of the B-52's, **Gail Ann Dorsey**, a veteran of David Bowie's bands, and **Maggie Moore**, formerly of the Off Broadway musical "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," for an eclectic evening of acoustic songs.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 22: The bilingual Brooklyn outfit **Cordero**. Jan. 23: Clearly relaxed and enjoying himself, as much as it is possible, during his residency in the intimate Old Office space, the singer-songwriter **Mark Eitzel** spends nearly as much time tuning his guitar as he does playing his poignantly despairing songs. His devoted fans, with their unwashed hair and carefully worn denim jackets, like it just this way. With **Jennifer O'Connor**. Jan. 25: The Brothers Past churn out improvisational rock and roll that's heavy on group interplay.

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Jan. 22: **Johnny Marr and the Healers** (see the Bowery Ballroom). Jan. 25: The **Mendoza Line** is a literate sextet from Brooklyn by way of Athens, Georgia, specializing in sweet country-esque music.

RODEO BAR

375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The Tarbox Ramblers, a wild neo-hillbilly ensemble out of Boston, stops by Jan. 24-25. Between the fiddles, string bass, drums, and slide guitar, you won't know what hit you. The band's eclectic self-titled debut album is filled with early-twentieth-century blues and backcountry music.

S.O.B.'s

204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Jan. 23: **Si*Sé** is a downtown electronica collective led by the enchanting vocalist **Carol C.** The band mixes Latin rhythms and an urban sensibility into an intoxicating cocktail. With **Volumen Cero**. Plenty of bands have heavy guitars and a sensibility that looks to the Manchester music scene of the nineteen-eighties, but this Miami-based quartet, which has been together for a decade, throws Spanish lyrics into the mix. Their debut album, "Lucas," is one of a select few rock-*en-español* releases on a major label.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL

59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Feb. 8: The pop singer turned jazz crooner **Curtis Stigers** is the headliner at a hallowed cabaret venue that in the past year has become increasingly jazz-oriented. Dining.

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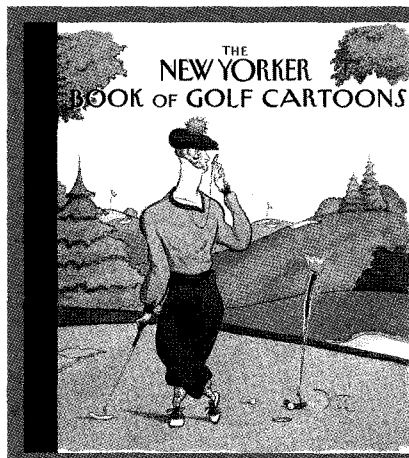
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BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Jan. 23-25: Anyone who caught Regina Carter fiddling around with Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg on PBS or who heard her scintillating 2001 recording, "Freefall," a duet with Kenny Barron, knows that this violinist brings something exciting to the jazz party. Her own bands could use a little more grit, perhaps, but Carter's potent combination of locomotive drive and honeyed rone indicates that the best is yet to come from this gifted player.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Jan. 26: Now seventy years old and still proudly waving the fusion banner, Joe Zawinul, the former overlord of Weather Report, gleefully folds together all manner of world music, pop, and jazz in his Zawinul Syndicate band.

FIREBIRD

365 W. 46th St. (586-0244)—Through Jan. 31: The comedian and entertainer Mark Nadler, a man who has accompanied the drag performer Dame Edna on Broadway and who is known for tap dancing and playing the piano at the same time, performs a program called "Tchaikowsky (and Other Russians)," in which he promises to spend the evening humorously deconstructing the Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin song.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Jan. 26: Guitars, guitars, and more guitars are the focus of this double bill. A trio with the superb swing-to-bop stylists Frank Vignola, Howard Alden, and the dean of them all, Bucky Pizzarelli, holds the mainstream fort. The modern master Pat Martino brings things forward in time. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator Les Paul.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Jan. 23: Surely playing with Lenny Kravitz has its rewards, but when the drummer Cindy Blackman gets the jazz jones, it's time for her to hit the clubs again. Her quartet ropes in the saxophonist J. D. Allen,

the pianist Carlton Holmes, and the bassist George Mitchell. Jan. 24-26: The accomplished veteran pianist Joanne Brackeen has a long history of establishing a deep rapport with her tenor saxophonists (consider her work with Stan Getz and Joe Henderson). Lately she's brought the increasingly authoritative Ravi Coltrane into her fold, and the results are more than promising.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard Ave., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Jan. 24-27: Pigeonholing either the guitarist Charlie Hunter or the drummer Bobby Previte is a fruitless effort; together these two skillful eclectics have fun skewering any and all musical expectations. Jan. 28: The accordionist Will Holshouser, usually found with the local chamber-jazz ensemble Brock Mumford, steps out with a trio.

SWEET RHYTHM

88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (255-3626)—Jan. 24-25: With a C.V. that includes serious road time with two figureheads of funky jazz, the organ player Jack McDuff and the tenor saxophonist Stanley Turrentine, the guitarist Dave Stryker knows the value of well-played blues. A pithy soloist who keeps his fingers, but not his imagination, in check, Stryker will get plush support from his horn-laden band to the Bone band.

TONIC

107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Jan. 23: You've heard Jenny Scheinman's violin on Nora Jones's hit record "Come Away with Me," but this ambitious composer and performer bites off a bigger chunk of the world's music when she's on her own. Her inclusive stew of jazz, klezmer, classical, and myriad downtown influences are sure to be well served by a band that includes the keyboardist Myra Melford and the trumpeter Russ Johnson.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Jan. 26: The Roy Hargrove quintet. Hargrove, the aggressive, historically aware trumpeter, has assembled a feisty band full of bright young improvisers, including the saxophonist Justin Rob-

inson and the drummer Willie Jones III, as well as an old-school veteran, the pianist Ronnie Matthews, whose watchful presence keeps their neobop real. The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Leonardo da Vinci, Master Draftsman" surveys more than a hundred drawings by the Renaissance man. Through March 30. ♦ "African-American Artists, 1929-1945" assembles works from its collection by Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence, Horace Pippin, Romare Bearden, and Bill Traylor, among others. Through May 4. ♦ "The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353." From a show named after a man on the move, you'd expect what? Gilded tent flaps? They're here, but the focus is on an urbane, nearly hundred-year dynasty that was founded in Iran by Hülegü, a grandson of Genghis. Ceremonial and decorative objects and lots of illustrated manuscripts—not to mention dauntingly profuse curatorial wall texts—document a cosmopolitan milieu in which Islamic styles got infused with Chinese ideas. Educational. Through Feb. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)

33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (708-9400)—"Masterworks of German Expressionism" presents twenty prints by members of the Brücke group, including Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, and Max Pechstein, as well as artists working between the World Wars, such as Max Beckmann and Käthe Kollwitz. Through Feb. 24. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Although Gee's Bend, Alabama, is isolated by poverty and a sharp curve in the Alabama River, the group of hamlets there has for generations fostered quilt-making as a virtuoso performance in frugality. Sixty-nine hand-sewn quilts, dating from the thirties to the present and incorporating a wild variety of geometries, colors, and fabrics, are on view. Though the women of the African-American community—many of them members of the local Pettway clan—quilt and sing together (a documentary film showing continuously in the gallery broadcasts the sewing circles' amazing harmonies), no two quilts are alike. Each woman has a fiercely individual approach. The visual compositions are electric with abstraction of the most visceral sort, aesthetically inventive and born of necessity. Through March 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Judy Chicago's monumental installation "The Dinner Party"—a delta-shaped banquet table for thirty-nine worthies from Primordial Goddess to Georgia O'Keeffe—comes from an era when women were wimmin. When the piece was completed, in 1979 (with the help of more than four hundred needleworkers and ceramicists), the sexual equipment pictured in the banquet plates shocked viewers, who found it either too explicit or too reductive. The work languished in storage. Now part of the museum's permanent collection, it looks wonderful—brilliantly colorful, poignantly bygone, but nevertheless a bona-fide triumph of scale and allegory. Through Feb. 9. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566)—Jo Baer, a major control freak of high minimalism in the nineteen-sixties,

JOHN RITTER

responded to Donald Judd's Kennedy-era death-of-painting dicta by proving that oil on canvas could be as thuddingly self-evident as any box. She made dead-flat expanses of white or gray with crisp black or color-striped borders on thick stretchers. The paintings, wonderfully installed here, emit an undimmed, Arctic glamour and do much to bring the seventy-three-year-old painter back from undeserved obscurity. The later works are blocky, inexplicable paintings hung below knee level. Lovely prints from 1974, based on language systems, end this imperturbable show. Through June 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

NEUE GALERIE

1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (628-6200)—"Dagobert Peche and the Wiener Werkstätte." When Peche died, in 1923, at the age of thirty-six, Josef Hoffmann, the founder of the Wiener Werkstätte, declared him "Austria's greatest genius in ornamentation since the days of the Baroque." As this sugarplum of a show reveals, Peche's designs sought to "overcome utility." He ardently believed that form should disguise function, not follow it. His irresistible flair for decorative embellishment is evident in every object, from a small silver box in the shape of a pumpkin topped with a curlicue of tendrils to a red-and-yellow cabinet with pyramid finials that looks like a collaboration between Michael Graves and Marie Antoinette. Through Feb. 10. (Open Fridays, 11 to 9, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES-UPDOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

ARMAN

This career survey, with works from 1954 to the present, proves that career surveys aren't always a good idea. Many of the French sculptor's most famous pieces are here, and they are still dazzling: a vitrine of silver combs ("Le Boudier de la Gorgone," 1962); a cube of shootrees encased in concrete ("Club Foot," 1971), and several of the wry, seductive Plexiglas "Poubelles." But the recent works range from slight to embarrassing, and, altogether, the impression is of an artist whose simple good idea (call it vitrification) has gradually passed into the hands of younger talents like Damien Hirst and James Hyde. Through Feb. 1. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900.)

DIANE EDISON

These close-up portraits of the artist, her mother, and her daughter are conservative in a kind of blinkered, deliberate sense, an African-American version of seventies realism. At best, in an extreme closeup called "Self-Portrait with Glasses," subtle distortions give Edison's looming, grumpy features a theatrical edge. Elsewhere, she offers us discipline but no surprises. Through Feb. 8. (George Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

"PINK SLIPS AND GOLDEN PARACHUTES"

Each of the seven artists in this group show has worked at the gallery, and one, Giovanni Garcia-Fenech, is its current director, but in general the works fail to live up to the show's heartwarming premise. Among the strong entries are two vivid, idiosyncratic paintings on wood by Jeff Gaunt, by turns delicate and blunt. The best features a wispy, canting tree attended by textured white blobs. But an ethereal fabric piece by Jessica Rankin, embroidered with maplike mountains and fragments of earnest poetic text, could be mistaken for a map of Tolkien's Middle Earth. Through Feb. 2. (The Project, 427 W. 126th St. 662-8610.)

Short List

ANDRÁS BÖRÖCZ

Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 861-7338. Through Jan. 25.

RAYMOND PETTIBON

Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. Through Feb. 15.

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

CHARLES HENRI FORD

Ford (1908-2002) was an inveterate art-world hipster, a habitué of both Gertrude Stein's salon and Andy Warhol's Factory. Over the years he co-wrote a novel (a cult classic, "The Young and the Evil"), founded an influential magazine (*View*, which published Borges, Bowles, and Henry Miller), and experimented with art. This delightful exhibition, organized by the artist Jack Pierson, shows that Ford's life was more interesting than his work—portraits of the artist by Cecil Beaton and by Ford's longtime lover Pavel Tchelitchew are the best things on view. But although Ford's paintings and sculptures (made to order in Kathmandu) are lackluster, his photographs of subjects from Paul Cadmus to Penny Arcade are irresistible. Through Feb. 1. (Albus, 511 W. 25th St. 242-6242.)

INIGO MANGLANO-OVALLE

A star of international festivals, the ambitious Madrileño weighs in with "Purgatory," the first in what he promises will be a Dantean trilogy of high-tech exhibitions about apocalyptic modern events and ideas. The centerpiece is a huge and very beautiful computer-assisted hanging sculpture of a thundercloud, covered in titanium leaf. Its decorative éclat overwhelms a figdity thesis about Robert Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project. Like many other festivalists, Manglano-Ovalle overburdens his visual style with concepts, as if beauty were impermissible without intellectual pomp. Through Feb. 15. (Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999.)

RAYMOND PETTIBON

"Follow me!—I'm the artist. I don't think we've met." So goes one text, accompanying the image of a torchbearer, in a two-gallery onslaught of poem-drawings by Pettibon, art's Eminem. There is little evident advance from the artist's early work (from the eighties) at Zwirner & Wirth to his recent stuff at David Zwirner, apart from more use of ugly, grabby color. Pettibon keeps subjecting crude visions of art, sex, religion, and baseball to finely phrased, cracked clarities of thought. He is demonic and modest, and given to delicate regrets: "This evening, and indeed all this day, I ought to have been reading and filling the margins of Malthus." Through Feb. 8. (David Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 727-2070. See also Uptown Short List.)

SHAHZIA SIKANDER

The Pakistani-born pasticheur of Indo-Persian miniature painting kicks up, in digital animations on two monitors, her meticulous phantasmagorias of mingled Hindu, Muslim, and Christian motifs. The results are enchanting and spooky, as when black hairdos of gopis (the lovers of Krishna) detach and swarm like bats. Sikander proves that miniatures are a live tradition, subject to cogent innovations. Her message is a fond plea for multiculturalism on the subcontinent, where competing visions of the sacred attend dangerous passions. Through Feb. 8. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262.)

Short List

JEAN-MARC BUSTAMANTE

Matthew Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Feb. 15.

YAYOI KUSAMA

Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 366-4774. Through Jan. 25.

ERIC WESLEY

Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through Feb. 1.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

DAVID SCHER

Scher is a champion in the punk-doodling sector of the art world. His first show at Koenig is dominated by a huge wall of ink drawings and watercolors, ranging from tiny one-liners to big psyche-scapes populated by desultory vultures, pyramids of jin-

goish citizens, and surreal sporting scenes. At times, Scher may remind you of Sergio Aragones, Raymond Pettibon, and Bruegel, to name only a few possibilities. But his dry, abrasively beguiling sense of humor remains as addictive as it is protean. One small drawing features a phrase that might as well be the artist's motto: "Eggs Any Style." Through Feb. 12. (249 Centre St. 334-9255.)

TABLES FOR TWO



AIX

2398 Broadway, at 88th St. (874-7400)—There may be an Aix in Provence, but how much Provence is there in Aix? This clever new restaurant on the Upper West Side, a neighborhood barren of ambitious cuisine until very recently, is many steps removed from the daily produce market under the sycamores of Place Richelme in Aix-en-Provence. The chef, Didier Viro, formerly of Viro and Jean-Georges, employs the ingredients and combinations of southern France the way Coltrane used Rodgers and Hammerstein. There's a pistou here, a tomato tarte there, and quince everywhere, but there's also a lot of elegant horseplay.

Aix is laid out on three levels, like a tackle box, and the walls are painted yellow and red. The waitresses wear dowdy brown-and-red outfits—like barmaids in Arles, one supposes, or Brownies. The dishes, though, look smart. This isn't tall food, but there are many instances of sauce art. And it's diverting, while trying to make a terrine of sautéed, pistachio-crustéd foie gras last, to sample tastes of each of the surrounding three sauces (a pistachio vinaigrette, a balsamic vinegar, a peach coulis) and then to swirl the colors around on the plate. The trio of flavors (and the messy plate) help you overcome the nagging feeling that some of the food—say, the raw-tuna appetizer, thatched with cucumber and bullied by a horseradish-yogurt sauce—is fussier than it needs to be.

Another sauce worth dipping a thumb into is the cocoa-coffee reduction that comes with the hunks of venison. With venison, generally, you want something sweet. But Viro's cocoa-coffee sauce is almost bitter, veering pleasingly toward Vegemite, and the sweetness is furnished by a quince-beet strudel. The result is something both hearty and sly, like many of the best things at Aix.

Dessert, on the other hand, is all trickery. "The pastry chef is a little odd," the waitress explained. Odd how (good odd or bad odd?) she wouldn't elaborate. Examples of both appeared: a so-called Provence salad, a layered stack of sugared green tomatoes and candied celery with a mint sorbet, was top notch. The other was a licorice panna cotta with a "tangerine tartare." To approximate this one at home, you might try brushing your teeth with Tom's toothpaste, then drinking a glass of orange juice. (Open daily for dinner. Entrées \$22-\$29.)

—Nick Paumgarten

"SESSION THE BOWL"

Can a bunch of undistinguished paintings and photographs measure up against a posse of street athletes doing skateboard tricks? That's the question posed by this odd, enjoyable show. The centerpiece is a vast peanut-shaped skateboard bowl; skaters show up the moment the gallery opens. On the walls around it are works by thirty-one artists, including graffiti names and, of course, Larry Clark. By late afternoon, when the run-of-the-mill carvers give way to pros doing backside axle stalls and ollies, nobody is looking at the walls. Through Feb. 15. (Deitch Projects Annex, 18 Wooster St. 343-7300.)

"WALKING IN THE CITY"

The gallery distributes a free color brochure to every visitor. But this exhibition feels more like a

pop-up illustration of the curators' concept—that urban strolls are acts of “spatial appropriation”—than an engaging experience in its own right. Half the work comes from the sixties or seventies, including a video of a kimono-clad Yayoi Kusama walking with a parasol and a pair of photographs by David Wojnarowicz of a man wearing an Arthur Rimbaud mask like a louche trick-or-treater. Through Feb. 1. (Apex Art, 291 Church St. 431-5270.)

Short List

DAVID HAMMONS

Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599. Through Feb. 1.

MEL KENDRICK

Nolan/Eckman, 560 Broadway. 925-6190.

Through Feb. 8.

PHOTOGRAPHY

EDWARD BURTINSKY

The shapes, patterns, and scale of these images, depicting landscapes that have been transformed by the oil industry, briefly distract the viewer from the destructive process inherent in drilling. A shimmering pipeline cuts a geometric maze through a serene, forested terrain. Expansive fields of monochromatic, earth-toned, mechanized rigs seem chaotic, yet also disciplined. Who knew there'd be so many crisscrossing power lines in the middle of an oil field? Not a single human is seen in these expanses, which gives the photographs the eerie semblance of functioning ghost towns. However, Burtinsky contrasts the enormity of such industrial terrain with traces of those who've changed it so radically: roads, tire tracks, and what at first glance seems to be a Tonka truck. Through Feb. 8. (Cowles, 537 W. 24th St. 925-3500.)

THOMAS FLECHTNER

This Swiss photographer has been working close to home, but seemingly only when there's so much snow on the ground that he can't get to the airport to head for sunnier climes. The hotels, highway underpasses, and apartment houses look unreal; the lighting and the snow conspire to create a forbidding sense of silent isolation. Flechtner must have a heavy-duty parka, because he also shows a series of color prints for which he strapped lights onto his skis and created patterns—straight lines, circles, dashes—in the snow with the shutter of his camera open for as long as fourteen hours. Despite the bravura “How did he do it?” factor, these images are gorgeous and humbling at the same time. Through Feb. 1. (Kennedy Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 741-0963.)

MICHAEL KENNA

Unlike the Japan of other contemporary photographers, for whom depicting that country means capturing the teen-age excess and neon bustle of Tokyo, Kenna's Japan is comprised of lonely, expansive landscapes, so empty as to appear not just a world but an era apart from the country's cities. Kenna is best known for his shadowy, big-sky architectural landscapes, but the intimate images here are restrained and exquisitely calibrated, as spare, misty, and elegant as a Chinese scroll painting. In one, the sky and the sea roil in a gray light so dreamy and diffused that it appears less a photograph and more a painting rendered in watery inks. Indeed, there are calligraphic elements in many of these photos, which seems appropriate for an artist who, rather than merely documenting a landscape, has captured the very essence of Japanese aestheticism. Through March 1. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 989-7600.)

ANDREW MOORE

Soviet Communism may now be a thing of the past, but the aesthetic associated with it—grim, towering blocks of gray apartment buildings, desolate landscapes with palettes of scabby greens and browns—persists in the West's visual imagination. Moore, whose previous show of Havana interiors was so colorful and buoyant that it made Communism seem like a great thing (from an aesthetic standpoint, at least) here ventures beyond

the expected pictorial representations of Russia to give us instead images of giddy beauty and majesty. In “Rotari's Gallery, Peterhof,” a tall mirror, edged with baroque gold curlicues, is flanked by portraits of ivory-skinned Russian beauties; the room positively froths with Romanovian excess. The landscapes—with their elegant, unpeopled silence—will remind viewers of Candida Hofer's perfect interiors. In taking Russia—its contradictions and gorgeous ruins—at face value, he captures a country's diversity and history in a mere nine images. Through Jan. 25. (Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

“PHOTOGRAPHY PAST/FORWARD:

APERTURE AT 50”

As the culmination of its fiftieth-anniversary party, *Aperture* has gathered together the classic work of its own photographers that was strewn around the city last October. A true *Who's Who* of photojour-



The violinist Vadim Repin performs at Avery Fisher Hall on January 26.

nalism and work of an artier stripe will be shown, including pieces by Bernd and Hilda Becher, Mary Ellen Mark, Man Ray, Lorna Simpson, Robert Mapplethorpe, László Moholy-Nagy, and *Aperture's* founders, Ansel Adams, Minor White, and Dorothea Lange. Through Jan. 31. (Sotheby's, 1334 York Ave., at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 857-0000—“First Photographs.” The remarkable thing about the English gentleman-scholar William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-77) is not so much that he invented photography (perfecting the negative-positive process in the early eighteen-forties) but that he immediately followed his scientific achievements with artistic ones. His work is a perfect balance of the values and aesthetics of the Industrial Revolution and the Romantic movement. This is the first-ever comprehensive exhibition of his work in America, and what's truly astounding is that the show includes almost every style of photography as we know it now: portraiture, landscape, architectural, still-life, botanical, allegorical, and travel are all present. While Talbot's “photogenic drawings,” as he originally called them, might not blow away the conceptualists among us, the sheer breadth of his out-

put and expanse of his curiosity will. ♦ Bruce Davidson's “Time of Change.” ♦ “Weegee's Trick Photography.” All shows through Feb. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

“WHO? ME?”

Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223.

Through Jan. 24.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S

Jan. 23 at 10:15 A.M.: A broad and impressive selection of Old Master paintings features works by Weenix, Hals, Botticelli, Boucher, Rubens, and many others. Mantegna's “Descent Into Limbo,” considered to be the artist's last work still in private hands (and expected to bring up to thirty million dollars), is the highlight of the sale. ♦ Jan. 23 at 2: A second session of Old Master paintings, along with a selection of sculpture. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S

Jan. 22 at 10 A.M.: Old Master drawings from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Highlights of the sale include a cartoon of the Madonna and Child by Il Sodoma (estimated to sell for approximately a million dollars) and a cache of more than seven hundred drawings by J. H. W. Tischbein, twenty-four of which come with accompanying verses by the artist's friend Goethe. ♦ Jan. 22 at 2: Part II of the Benjamin F. Edwards collection of Chinese export porcelain. ♦ Jan. 24 at 10 A.M.: Old Master paintings, including works by Watteau, Boucher, Brueghel, Jacob van Ruisdael, Van Dyck, and others. “Still Life with Hares,” one of only twelve such works by Goya (and expected to bring up to three million dollars), is the highlight of the sale. ♦ Jan. 27 at 2: Works by self-taught and outsider artists from the twentieth century, including Edmondson (“Noah's Ark,” a limestone sculpture from 1930), Darger, and T aylor. (20 Rockefeller Plaza. 636-2000.)

DOYLE

Jan. 22 at 10 A.M.: A selection of Old Master paintings and drawings, along with a number of Asian art works, complements a sale of English and Continental furniture, silver, and decorations. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN

Jan. 23 at 10:30 A.M.: Old Master drawings, including works by Scorza, Zuccaro, Makart, Blake, and a follower of Hans Hoffmann (“Dead Pigeon,” a watercolor estimated to sell for up to ten thousand dollars). (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

ANTIQUES AT THE PIERS

The second and final weekend of folk art, Americana, furniture, porcelain, and more, offered by more than three hundred dealers. (Piers 90 and 92, Twelfth Ave. between 50th and 55th Sts. 255-0020. Jan. 25-26.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

Olivier Tambosi's new production of “Jenůfa,” set in a towering old mill, aims to take Janáček's provincial tragedy into the realm of Sophocles, and with a uniformly powerful cast led by Karita Mattila in the title role and Deborah Polaski as her stern stepmother, Kostelnicka, it almost succeeds. Musically, the performance, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski, could scarcely be improved. Missing in the stylization of the acting and the symbolism of the stage design (including the most obtrusive rock in the Met's history) is a quality essential to Janáček's quirky power—his buoyancy in the face of horror. (Jan. 22 at 8 and Jan. 25 at 1:30.) ♦ A new cast steps into this revival of Franco Zeffirelli's stately 1990 production of “Don Gio-

JOE CIARDIELLO

vanni": Sondra Radvanovsky, Melanie Diener, Anna Netrebko, Peter Mattei (in the title role), Rainer Trost (making his debut, in the role of Don Ottavio), Ferruccio Furlanetto, and Patrick Carfizzi. The distinguished veteran Kurt Moll remains, as the Commendatore; Sylvain Cambreling conducts. (Jan. 23 and Jan. 27 at 8.) ♦ Mozart's "Die Entführung aus dem Serail," with Alexandra Deshorties, Jennifer Welch-Babidge, Paul Groves, Barry Banks, Kurt Moll, and Matthias von Stegmann (in the speaking role of Pasha Selim); James Levine. (Jan. 24 and Jan. 28 at 8.) ♦ Sonja Frisell's 1988 staging of "Aida," the crown jewel among the Met's more conservative productions, uses breathtaking sets and resplendent costumes to create a world that matches the grandeur and mystery of Verdi's music—and transcends the star power of any particular cast. Still, this one is hardly cause for complaint: Deborah Voigt, in the title role, leads a roster that also includes Dolores Zajak, Richard Margison (as Radamès), Mark Delavan, and Robert Lloyd; Marco Armiliato. (Jan. 25 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

COLLEGIATE CHORALE:

VERDI'S "LA FORZA DEL DESTINO"

"Forza," simply put, is a beast: no other Verdi masterpiece can match the intensity of its overheated melodrama or the absurdity of its far-fetched plot. (If Gilda's improbable final scene in "Rigoletto" makes you titter, then the accidental-death-by-dropped-gun play in "Forza" will send you over the edge.) This is an opera in which raw emotions take precedence over the coherence of the action, but a good concert performance might be just the thing to boost its dramatic credibility. Robert Bass, the chorale's director, is clearly making a serious effort, bringing in Maria Guleghina and Salvatore Licitra (in his Carnegie Hall debut) to fill the leading roles. The estimable cast also includes Mark Rucker, Marianne Cornetti, Julian Konstantinov, and Paul Plishka; Bass conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 23 at 7:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

One of the more admirable aspects of Zubin Mehta's tenure as the Philharmonic's music director was his dogged insistence on standing up for the masterworks of the Second Viennese School—to the frustration of some of his players and to the annoyance of much of his audience. But public resistance to the music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern has declined somewhat in recent years, and Mehta, who studied in Vienna with the legendary Hans Swarowsky, has this music in his veins. The concert's first half consists of Webern, ranging from the yearning late Romanticism of "Im Sommerwind" to the ardent expressionism of the Passacaglia and the Six Pieces for Orchestra to the crystalline, Cubist mastery of the Concerto, Op. 24. After intermission, Midori joins Mehta for what will doubtless be a sumptuous and driven performance of Elgar's Violin Concerto. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5656. Jan. 22-23 at 7:30, Jan. 24 at 2, and Jan. 25 at 8.)

MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

A newly established concert series, coordinated by the violinist and conductor Stephanie Chase, presents music for chamber orchestra by Mozart, Schoenberg (the First Chamber Symphony), and Beethoven (the Symphony No. 7). (Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St. 877-4402. Jan. 23 at 8.)

ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DE LYON

David Robertson, the young, appealing, and prodigiously talented American conductor, may still lack a major American job, but his work at the head of this polished and proficient ensemble has been delighting European audiences for years. He leads two adventurous programs at Carnegie Hall, each of which pays homage to his mentor Pierre Boulez. Jan. 24 at 8: Webern's Six Pieces for Orchestra and Ravel's Piano Concerto for the

Left Hand complement two Boulez works, the mournfully lyrical "Rituel: In Memoriam Bruno Maderna" and a suite of his "Notations" for orchestra (Nos. I-IV and VII). ♦ Jan. 25 at 8: Boulez's "Figures-Doubles-Prismes," one of a number of works that the aggressively intellectual composer has subjected to a lifelong process of development and revision, is the centerpiece for a concert that also features music by Bartók (the Piano Concerto No. 2, with Leif Ove Andsnes) and Stravinsky ("The Rite of Spring"). (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800.)

GOETHAM CITY ORCHESTRA:

"BACH DANCES"

You don't go to one of George Steel's Bach concerts for dazzling virtuoso performances, but for the connections that this intrepid conductor-impresario's programming can reveal. This one mixes two of the Master's Orchestral Suites (Nos. 3 and 4) with terpsichorean works by two composers who influenced him, Lully (a suite from the opera "Alceste") and Muffat. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Jan. 25 at 8.)

GREGG SMITH SINGERS

Smith, a redoubtable advocate for contemporary music, mixes recent American works with choral classics by Monteverdi, Ives, and Rorem ("In Time of Pestilence"), along with a dash of Meredith Willson. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 914-376-8899. Jan. 25 at 8.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

Wolfgang Sawallisch is closing his directorship of the orchestra the way he began it—as a scrupulous guardian of conservative traditions. Still, it's surprising how deeply his latest Carnegie Hall concert delves into the febrile emotions of the early Romantic movement, offering not only two works by Schumann (the jubilant "Rhenish" Symphony and, with Leonidas Kavakos, the moody, gothic Violin Concerto) but Weber's "Der Freischütz" Overture as well. (247-7800. Jan. 27 at 8.)



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JERUSALEM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Lawrence Foster conducts music by Bernstein (the "Jeremiah" Symphony, with the mezzo-soprano Linda Pavelka), Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major, with Joseph Kalichstein), Strauss, and Ynam Leef. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 28 at 8.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC

Jan. 23-24 at 7:30: Music by Debussy, Schumann, Stravinsky, and Schubert (the Piano Trio in B-Flat Major), performed by the violinist Stefan Milenkovich, the cellist Ani Aznavoorian, and the pianist Simone Dinnerstein. ♦ Jan. 25 at 7:30 and Jan. 26 at 4: The soprano Wendy Nielsen joins the pianists John Churchwell and Navah Perlman for a program of sonatas (by Scarlatti and Beethoven) and songs (by Mozart, Dohnányi, and Dvořák). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Jan. 24 at 8: London's Schubert Ensemble celebrates its twentieth anniversary with a New York debut program of Schubert (the "Trout" Quintet), Brahms, and Martin Butler (the New York premiere of "American Rounds"). ♦ Jan. 26 at 8: The guitarist Christopher Parkening plays his only New York recital of the season, an evening of music by Rodrigo, Piazzolla, Villa-Lobos, and others. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 570-3949.)

FOCUS! FESTIVAL: "BEYOND THE ROCKIES"

New Yorkers, always a little smug about their city's role as a new-music powerhouse, have a valuable opportunity to broaden their appreciation of the American scene by sampling this year's installments of the conductor Joel Sachs's annual festival with the New Juilliard Ensemble. Jan. 24 at 8: The festival begins and ends with music by Lou Harrison, as Sachs pays a belated eighty-fifth-birthday tribute to the friendly patriarch of West Coast composers. His "Concerto in Slendro," a beguiling work for violin and a percussion ensemble full of tack pianos, plumber's pipes, and other such things, leads off a concert of music by Virko Bailey, Melissa Hui, and others. ♦ Jan. 27 at 8: "Four Doctors," a typically iconoclastic work by Henry Brant (last year's winner of the Pulitzer Prize for music), opens a program of pieces by such composers as Subotnick, Stravinsky (the Septet), and Cage. ♦ Jan. 28 at 8: The world premiere of Walter Blanton's "Jackson Street After Dark" is the highlight of a concert that also includes works by Milhaud, Harrison, Roger Reynolds, Terry Riley ("Cinco de Mayo"), and others. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406. Through Jan. 31.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

No chapter in the history of twentieth-century music is more heroic than the story of the composers of the Soviet Union, who struggled for free expression under the strictures of Communist rule. Stalin and his successors didn't take to killing or imprisoning composers (Russia's writers fared far worse), but each musician of talent had to make painful choices, which "Masterpieces of the Russian Underground," the society's festival of concerts, lectures, films, photographs, and poetry readings, will explore. It begins with a concert of music by Shostakovich (the Piano Trio No. 2), Schnittke, Ustvolskaya, and Weinberg, performed by the clarinetist David Shifrin, the pianist Vladimir Feltsman (the festival's organizer), and others. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5788. Jan. 24 at 7:30. For the Society's complete schedule of events, see its Web site, www.chambermusicsofny.org.)

"THE ART OF THE GUITAR"

The violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg teams up with the guitarists Sérgio and Odair Assad for an evening of music by Bach, Ginastera, Bartók, Piazzolla, and Charlie Chaplin. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500. Jan. 25 at 8.)

VADIM REPIN

This exciting young Russian violinist, who for years has flitted just below the threshold of superstar status, makes an overdue New York recital debut with a concert of classics by Tartini, Prokofiev (the Sonata No. 1 in F Minor), Grieg, Chausson, and Ravel. His pianist is Boris Berezovsky. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 26 at 3.)

FELICITY LOTT AND MALCOLM MARTINEAU: "NIGHT AND DAY"

The soprano and the pianist perform an ingeniously crafted program of love songs designed for every hour of the day, by such composers as Mahler, Wolf, Berlioz, Vaughan Williams, Oscar Straus, and, naturally, Cole Porter. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 26 at 5.)

MUSICA PACIFICA

The early-music group, made up of members of San Francisco's renowned Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, play sonatas, concertos, and other works by such composers as Bach, Corelli, Gibbons, and Handel. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Jan. 26 at 5.)

SPECULUM MUSICAE

New York's most renowned new-music ensemble offers a concert of works by Carter, Perle, and Knussen (the lapidary "Songs Without Voices") and two American premières by Ligeti (the "Weöres Songs," with the mezzo-soprano Mary Nessinger, and the "Hamburg Concerto," with the hornist William Purvis). Reinbert de Leeuw conducts. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Jan. 27 at 8.)

DA CAPO CHAMBER PLAYERS

Stefan Wolpe, a daringly eclectic modernist whose music influenced a number of the ensemble's favorite New York composers, is the center of the Players' latest program, which features not only his "Trio" and "Music for Any Instruments" but also a round of canons by Carter, Schoenberg, and Schumann. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Jan. 28 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

SKYLINE DREAMS

In the discussions about how to replace the World Trade Center, has anyone considered creating a set of parabolic towers more than a thousand feet tall? A building with a three-hundred-seventy-five-foot-tall exhibition space and galleries devoted to each of the continents? A structure lined with mosaics and stained glass? Back in 1908, the Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí proposed a hotel for New York City with just those epic elements. "It is really a world center, a transcontinental building," the Barcelona-based Gaudí scholar Marc Mascort i Boix says. On Jan. 23 at 6, Boix joins his compatriot Juan Morell, an art historian, to discuss the details of Gaudí's plans, and what became of them. (Graduate Center, City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. No tickets necessary.)

READINGS

Jan. 23 at 7:30: Gary Shteyngart offers passages from his novel, "The Russian Debutante's Handbook," and Akhil Sharma reads a selection from his novel, "An Obedient Father." (Makor, 35 W. 67th St. 601-1000.) ♦ Jan. 26 at 2: Judy Blunt reads from "Breaking Clean," her account of life on a Montana cattle ranch in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. (Wave Hill, 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. 718-549-3200.) ♦ Jan. 26 at 7: The novelists David Gates and Mary Gaitskill read from new work. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Jan. 28 at 7: The writers Francisco Goldman, Tama Janowitz, and Scott Spencer join the digital artist Paul Kaiser for an evening of words and images. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.)

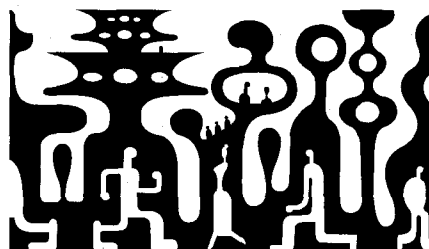
TALK

Jan. 27 at 7: The Japanese explorer Diasuke Takahashi gives an illustrated lecture detailing his global pursuit of the legacy of Alexander Selkirk, the eighteenth-century Scottish sailor whose story became the basis for *Robinson Crusoe*. (Explorers Club, 46 E. 70th St. 628-8383.)

BOOK CURRENTS

City Lights

As New Yorkers consider their choices for a reimagined downtown skyline, two new books take helpful looks at the urban milieu. **THE ARCHITECTURE OF LANDSCAPE, 1940-1960** (Pennsylvania), edited by Marc Treib, presents the city as an or-



ganism, capable of healthy growth but susceptible to illness. An essay by Thorbjörn Andersson describes Sweden as an early laboratory for landscape architects: Stockholm's congested downtown was plagued by tuberculosis epidemics and other health problems until the nineteen-fifties, when city planners restructured the afflicted areas to allow for more air and light. And in postwar Berlin, a food shortage prompted the landscape architect Georg Pniower to design "fruit landscapes" with one-family homes and vegetable gardens.

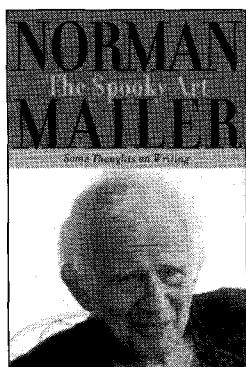
The plotting of city lines defines George Tice's photographs; in **URBAN LANDSCAPES** (I.C.P./Norton) Tice constructs a social and cultural portrait of the gritty New Jersey environs where he grew up. His compositions are beautiful, deep images that draw viewers in—a water tower looming behind a gas station, the corrugated back of a drive-in-movie screen, scrappy storefronts in Atlantic City, bicycles leaning in front of Sal's Pizza & Subs. Impersonality may often be part of industrial imagery, but Tice focusses instead on the personal, emphasizing a smiling couple on their Hudson River houseboat rather than the cool city across the river. In a rooftop photograph, a block of Hoboken tenements is crisscrossed by laundry lines with randomly clothespinned handkerchiefs and underwear. "All things are subject to change," Tice writes. "Looking for beauty, I managed to find it in places that some would think the most unlikely."

—Lauren Porcaro

RICHARD MC GUIRE

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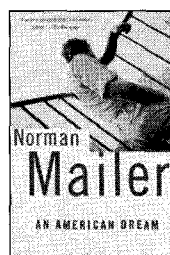
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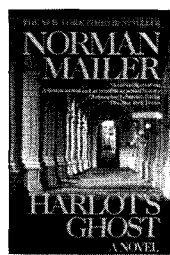
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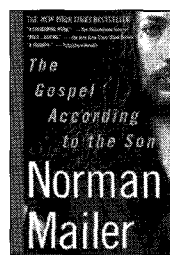
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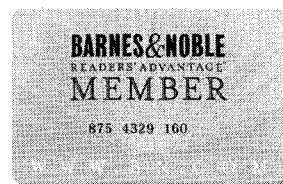


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MOVIES OPENING

AMEN

Costa-Gavras directed this historical thriller about the Vatican's response to the Holocaust. With Ulrich Tukur as the real-life Nazi chemist Kurt Gerstein and Mathieu Kassovitz as a fictional Jesuit. Opening Jan. 24. (Paris and Quad Cinema.)

BLIND SPOT: HITLER'S SECRETARY

Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Jan. 24. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

DARKNESS FALLS

Emma Caulfield of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" stars in this horror film, in which an evil spirit exacts vengeance on a small town. Opening Jan. 24.

IN THE MIRROR OF MAYA DEREN

A documentary profile of the avant-garde filmmaker. Opening Jan. 24. (Anthology Film Archives.)

FILM NOTES

ABOUT SCHMIDT

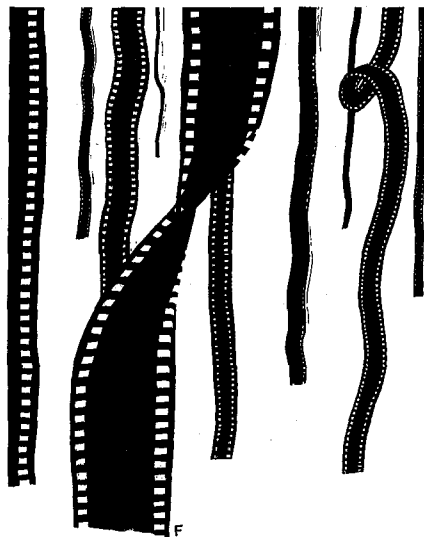
Alexander Payne's last movie, "Election," was unpleasant, timely, and as sharp as a nib. His new movie is unpleasant, indecisive, and about as cheering as a damp fog. Jack Nicholson plays the eponymous Schmidt, who leaves a long career in insurance and slumps into graceless retirement. His wife (June Squibb) dies, whereupon his daughter (Hope Davis) takes over the household; soon enough, the aging male is left alone, and we are left to ponder the mismatch—unresolved by Payne—between Schmidt the early fustpot and Schmidt the emerging slob, with a riot of used food packaging at his feet. After that, the movie takes to the road, like a late, soft aftermath to "Five Easy Pieces." The Nicholson of that film made hard choices, but here he plays to the viewers' cultish worship of Jack the Lad, and even the saddest scenes have flourishes of rumpled clowning. A picture that aimed to celebrate a regular guy winds up endorsing his comic disdain for the stale lives around him. With Dermot Mulroney, Kathy Bates, and a hot tub that has seen it all.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 12/16/02.) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

ADAPTATION

The hero of the new experimental comedy by the writer Charlie Kaufman and the director Spike Jonze is Kaufman himself, played by Nicolas Cage. He's signed on to adapt Susan Orlean's "The Orchid Thief," which he calls "great sprawling *New Yorker* stuff"—by which he means it's a screenwriter's nightmare: ruminative and descriptive, but lacking any clear kind of "arc." Cage's Charlie, a malcontent who wears a flannel shirt in Los Angeles, works himself into a fury of self-loathing, and, for about an hour, the movie is a funny, deft metafiction. We see the story Kaufman is trying to write; Orlean (Meryl Streep) tags along with John Laroche (Chris Cooper), a Florida man who was arrested while poaching a rare form of orchid. Unsocialized but erudite, a swamp-bred crank, Laroche fascinates the melancholy Orlean. The performances are all expert, especially Cooper's, but the movie takes a disastrous leap into melodrama at the end, which can be interpreted as either a sellout to Hollywood convention or a savage self-parody of selling out. Either way, it's a mistake.—*David Denby* (12/9/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kew Gardens Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Sunshine Cinema.)

ANTWONE FISHER

"Oprah" for men. Fisher's horrific childhood—he was abandoned by his mother and then sexually molested in his Cleveland foster home—gets the full Hollywood treatment in Denzel Washington's directorial debut. The self-congratulatory autobiographical script, written by Fisher, concentrates on his relationship with a psychologist (played by Washington) who provides him with the key to conquering his past. Derek Luke, as the title character, and Joy Bryant, as his love interest, give perfor-



mances that raise the film above its inspirational message, but just barely. Washington directs in his own image—the movie is sturdy and handsomely made, but lacks grit and complexity.—*Bruce Diones* (Beekman, Chelsea West, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.)

BLIND SPOT: HITLER'S SECRETARY

Traudl Junge started working for Hitler in 1942 when she was twenty-two years old. She took dictation and typed his private communiqués, and was one of the few people to survive the final days in the Berlin bunker. After the war, she kept herself and her story out of sight until two Austrian filmmakers, André Heller and Othmar Schmiderer, interviewed her two years ago, shortly before her death. The film is just Frau Junge and the camera, unadorned with newsreel footage, still photography, or even a fade.

old guy's glory, slips into deception as a way of life, impersonating, serially, an airline pilot, a doctor, and a lawyer, kiting checks along the way. Agent Hanratty (Tom Hanks) of the F.B.I. pursues Frank with a Javert-like relentlessness, yet becomes fond of the young scoundrel. The movie is really about an amoral boy lucky enough to have two fathers, each with superb qualities. This real-life story (based on Abagnale's autobiography) is set in the sixties, and Spielberg has given it a sleek and carefree look. An expert and touching entertainment.—*D.D.* (12/23 & 30/02) (Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

LE CERCLE ROUGE

In this de-luxe piece of heist-film engineering from 1970, the writer-director Jean-Pierre Melville provides a satisfying payoff for the audience, if not the characters—according to the hardboiled karma of the plot, everyone winds up philosophical or dead. Just released ex-con Alain Delon and escaped prisoner Gian-Maria Volonté take turns saving each other's life and then enlist marksman Yves Montand to help them pull off a Paris jewelry-store robbery. Bourvil is the inspector on their trail, and François Périer the well-connected owner of an irresistible gangland night club. Volonté's juicy wildness as a self-proclaimed "amateur" and Montand's blowsy authority as an alcoholic help lubricate the plot. And with the help of the cinematographer Henri Decaë, Melville puts on a virtuoso display of movie-action geometry, from the red circle of chalk Delon uses on a pool cue to the slashing lines he cuts in his blocky American car. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum.)

CHICAGO

The time is the nineteen-twenties, but the setting is so stylized, so shamelessly grounded in a hundred other shows and films, that "Chicago" barely qualifies as a period piece; indeed, it merrily jabs at the celebrity-lust of our own era. Catherine Zeta-Jones is Velma Kelly, and Renée Zellweger is Roxie Hart. Each is a man-killer, and each resides in jail, plotting her de-



At the Gramercy Theatre, Syd Chaplin (half-brother of Charlie) in "A Submarine Pirate," an early silent film made with the cooperation of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The starkness is deliberate: there's nothing to cushion us from taking the measure of this dignified, carefully spoken old woman who worked next to Hitler, admiring him as a father figure while remaining unaware of the concentration camps. In German.—*Michael Agger* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

Leonardo DiCaprio is loose and easy—a movie star again—in Steven Spielberg's charming comedy about a teen-age con man. When his businessman/scam-artist father (Christopher Walken) loses his grip, Frank W. Abagnale (DiCaprio), eager to restore the

fense with the silken legal help of Billy Flynn (Richard Gere). The music and lyrics by Kander and Ebb operate on the old-fashioned principle that every song should be a showstopper, regardless of whether the show should be stopped. The director, Rob Marshall, cuts away furiously during every song, and this chronic wish to glance aside makes us wonder: could the performers not weather the camera's unstinting gaze? The only player to conquer the movie is Zeta-Jones, who gets by on a full tank of unleaded oomph. The film has punch, but it never really conveys the delicious, redeeming sense that life can be lived

RICHARD MERRIN

on the hoof.—A.L. (1/6/03) (84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

CITY OF GOD

Just how far into your face can a movie get? This one has every intention of leaving you scalded and bruised. Set in Rio de Janeiro, it was directed by Fernando Meirelles, who tries every trick known to cameramen: freeze frames, whip pans, multiple dissolves, slow motion, double motion, any kind of motion. The object is to keep pace with his characters, the young and dispossessed of the Brazilian slums. The movie hastens roughly from the nineteen-sixties to the eighties, as we watch the boys either die or grow old before their time. The result is a jolting ride, but such is the skill on show that we run the risk of being too exhilarated to notice every death; does the film convince in its plea for the forgotten poor, or are we encouraged to forget them as they fall? In Portuguese.—A.L. (1/20/03) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

Just as audiences are recovering from "Adaptation," here comes another Charlie Kaufman script. George Clooney directed, but this project is pure Kaufman: fact and fiction tossed in the blender together, with plenty of formal trickery. The story, or more precisely, the leaping-off point, is the autobiography of Chuck Barris, the producer who invented "The Dating Game," "The Newlywed Game," and "The Gong Show," which he also hosted. Then, there is this small matter of political assassinations: Barris claimed to be a C.I.A. hit man, tapped for various "wet" operations throughout his television career. Sam Rockwell plays Barris as a carnal, slightly crazed man who's also deeply insecure that he'll be remembered as a purveyor of trash. Is this what tipped him into his fantasy life? This nimble and free-spirited film doesn't say; it continually shifts perspective and plays with the mystery. In the end, it's a story of wayward ambition and an object lesson in what people will do when placed in front of a television camera. With Drew Barrymore and Julia Roberts as the duelling women in Barris's life.—M.A. (Union Square.)

CREEPSHOW

This 1982 five-part anthology movie, written by Stephen King and directed by George A. Romero, salutes the beloved EC horror comic books of the early fifties. Both Romero and King take their source as an excuse to be as freewheeling as possible in their comedic and scare tactics: the film contains three walking corpses, one suicidal monster weed, a Tasmanian devil who sinks her teeth into her enemies, a few vivid deaths by drowning, and one death by cockroach. The best comic moments play like "Airplane!"—parodies of movie and TV clichés carried off by stalwart character actors like Fritz Weaver, Hal Holbrook, E. G. Marshall, and (of course) Leslie Nielsen. The horrific moments work mostly because of their undiluted viciousness—we share in the sadistic satisfaction a henpecked husband takes in seeing his shrewish wife clawed and chomped to death. But the movie doesn't have a pulp vision, only a snickering attitude. It's all in the spirit of the young boy in the framing story (played by King's son) who says he hopes his comic-book-hating father rots in hell. King himself appears as a Down East screwup who thinks his life problems can be solved when a meteorite lands in his yard.—M.S. (Moving Image; Jan. 25.)

DIVINE INTERVENTION

A strange, disconnected sampler of gags, semi-stories, and outright fantasy. Still, as the director Elia Suleiman might point out, we live in peculiar times, and cinema should rise to the occasion. Suleiman is Palestinian—nobody else would conceive of a sequence in which a balloon bearing the face of Yasir Arafat drifts over an Israeli checkpoint—and his work takes both root and flight in the Occupied Territories. Insofar as there is a plot, it centers on a gloomy fellow, played by Suleiman himself, who has a harassed father (Nayef Fahoum Daher) and a disarmingly beautiful beloved (Manal Khader). Most of their interaction is performed in near-silence, with occasional rushes of music. Somehow, out of the unpromising material of small, disturbed lives, Suleiman has made a bone-dry comedy dedicated to the precarious border between the hapless and the hopeless. Imagine Monsieur Hulot unleashed upon Jerusalem and you will not be far off. If only Suleiman could have resisted



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the charms of silliness in his climactic sequence—one of those kung-fu disco mystical terrorist shoot-outs. Aren't they always a drag? In Arabic and Hebrew.—A.L. (1/20/03) (Angelika Film Center.)

GANGS OF NEW YORK

Daniel Day-Lewis, returning to movies after a spell of shoemaking in Florence, disports himself with royal assurance as the voluble thug William Cutting (Bill the Butcher) in Martin Scorsese's generally unsuccessful epic about nineteenth-century gang life in New York. Wielding knife and cleaver, Day-Lewis

ris) dying of AIDS. The widely separated episodes fit together as surely and lightly as dancers in a Balanchine ballet.—D.D. (12/23 & 30/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE LORD OF THE RINGS:

THE TWO TOWERS

If Peter Jackson's trilogy were to map every detail of the Master's work, the result would be three years long. In the event, he's crunched and tidied Tolkien's

is neither exaggerated nor minimized but presented with clear-eyed accuracy. Yet this is not a work of great originality or imagination. Its protagonist lacks depth, and the theme of survival through hiding is, by its very nature, redundant. The playwright Ronald Harwood adapted the 1946 book that Szpilman wrote about his experiences without attempting to open up the hero at all. Is he ashamed, defiant, guilty? Grateful for his luck? We haven't a clue. His survival is an anomaly, a mistake, a joke—and that may be why the story appealed to Polanski. Shot largely in Warsaw.—D.D. (1/13/03) (East 86th Street Cinema, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6.)

ROSEMARY'S BABY

Pregnant women sometimes look at their men as if to say, "What did you do to me?" Rosemary (Mia Farrow), the Omaha-born girl who's now living in Manhattan, has reason to wonder, and this 1968 satirical gothic thriller, written and directed by Roman Polanski, is told from her point of view. Rosemary's actor husband (John Cassavetes) conspires with a coven, drugs her, and mates her with Satan, in exchange for a Broadway hit. It's genuinely funny, yet it's also scary, especially for young women. The queasy and the grisly are mixed with an entertaining hipness. Farrow is enchanting in her fragility: she's just about perfect for her role. And the darkly handsome Cassavetes is ideal as the narcissist who makes the deal for a cloven-hoofed infant.—Pauline Kael (Film Forum; starting Jan. 24.)

RUSSIAN ARK

A guide to the treasures of the Hermitage, a rueful glance down the vistas of Russian history, or a show of technical prowess: take your pick. Alexander Sokurov, the creator of "Mother and Son," proves that his singular method—at once earthy and transcendent—is gaining strength and width. The new film unwinds in one take, lasting ninety-six minutes, and by some miracle we grow happily accustomed to its rhythm, like children held rapt by a bedtime story. The camera glides through galleries as if it were the eye of an invisible visitor; ahead is a black-coated stranger, who accosts passers-by and clucks tenderly, if critically, over the art. Sokurov has made not a documentary, however careful his inspection of painted surfaces, but a collection of small, sorrowful dramas—wait for the imperial children, or the blind woman caressing a marble sculpture. The effect is impenetrable, yet the film is blessed with clarity; maybe, if you spend that much time among Old Masters, they start to rub off on you. In Russian.—A.L. (12/16/02) (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

TALK TO HER

In Pedro Almodóvar's odd but touching romantic drama, two very different men are drawn together by a common task: taking care of women who have fallen into a coma. Benigno (Javier Cámara), a shy, seemingly asexual young male nurse, looks after Alicia (Lionel Watling), a beautiful ballet dancer. Marco (Dario Grandinetti), a fortyish Argentine writer, becomes the lover of a fierce, long-waisted female bullfighter (Rosario Flores). After she is gored in the ring, she never speaks again. Both love affairs are touched by fantasy. Almodóvar's point appears to be that you can't have love without fable—that every love affair is an improbable narrative wrung from non-being and loneliness. The movie is shot in a new, subdued style for the director: past and present flow together, and everything seems touched with a melancholy magic. Two ballets by the choreographer Pina Bausch are integral to the film's themes. In Spanish.—D.D. (11/25/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

25TH HOUR

A thirtyish drug dealer (Edward Norton) who is too smart for his situation gets pinched and sentenced to seven years in prison. His imminent departure produces a crisis in the lives of his best friends, a cynical Wall Street trader (Barry Pepper) and a schlubby private-school teacher (Philip Seymour Hoffman). The movie might be described as a turbulent elegy for the burnt-out hopes of a generation. There's a thriller plot buried in the material, but it's done half-heartedly. The glory of the movie is its talk—the profane New York verve of the three men, suffused with



Opening January 24, the documentary "Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary."

does what he can to give this semi-coherent production some theatrical panache, but Scorsese and his screenwriters never succeed in linking together the intimate personal dramas and the endless gang war between the nativist Yankees (i.e., Protestants) and the new waves of Irish immigrants. The movie isn't boring, but it's heavy-spirited, obvious, and grisly, with an emphasis on knives and blood that borders on the fetishistic. With a sullen, stolid Leonardo DiCaprio as a young Irish immigrant eager to avenge the death of his father, Cameron Diaz as a prostitute and pickpocket, Liam Neeson as a fallen Irish leader, and Jim Broadbent as the corrupt political boss William Tweed.—D.D. (12/23 & 30/02) (Battery Park 16, Cinema 2, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE HOURS

It has to overcome an over-all morbidity, a fractured time sequence, and Philip Glass's intrusive, chiming score, and, amazingly, it does. Stephen Daldry directed this adaptation of Michael Cunningham's prize-winning 1998 novel, from a script by David Hare. They've fashioned a lovely, serious work—as good as any recent "literary" movie—devoted to two themes, the variety of human bonds, especially the bond of love, and the gift that the dying make to the living. Nicole Kidman gives a revelatory performance as Virginia Woolf, both in 1923, at the time of writing "Mrs. Dalloway," and in 1941, when she loaded her coat with stones and walked into a river. Julianne Moore is a depressed Los Angeles housewife in 1951, and Meryl Streep plays a contemporary New York literary editor who hopes to give a party for a poet friend (Ed Har-

second book into an easily digestible three hours. We get flying dragons, a breathless opening sequence in which Gandalf (Ian McKellen) plummets down a belching abyss, and Shadowfax, a flawless white horse who will gallop in from nowhere, though only in slow-motion. Then there is Gollum, as white-skinned and blue-veined as moldering cheese, a character who gives the movie a chance for psychological inquiry—the one thing it doesn't require. One of the restrictions and pleasures of an epic is that it both pre-dates and outwits psychology. In addition, Gollum was forged on a computer, and his creators are so pleased with their baby that they can't help showing him off. This is a pity, and we may have to accept that, for those fooling around with brand-new technologies, the toys are simply too much fun. What allows Jackson to truly animate his pictures, even as they threaten to founder in fantastical gothic, is his knack for the telling gesture. With Orlando Bloom, providing the movie's wildest cheers as the blond-tressed elf Legolas.—A.L. (1/6/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

NARC

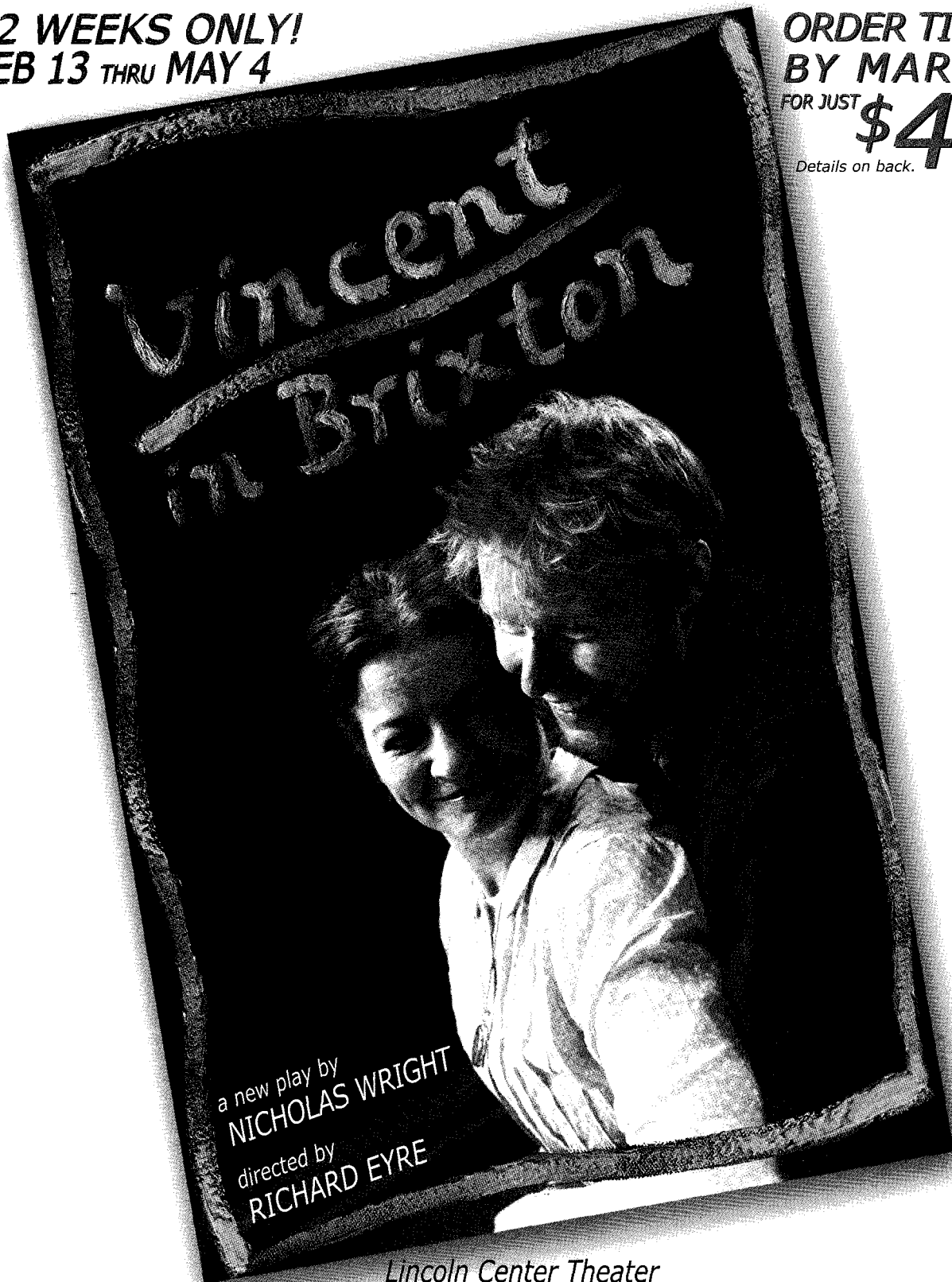
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE PIANIST

Roman Polanski's drama about the survival of a real-life Polish Jew, the pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrien Brody), during the grim days of the Holocaust is a movie that has been perfectly produced. The sense of scale and detail is exact, and the violence

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a post-September 11th bitterness. David Benioff adapted his own novel, and Spike Lee directed. Brian Cox plays the hero's father, and Rosario Dawson his girlfriend.—*D.D.* (1/13/03) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

FAR FROM HEAVEN (11/18/02)

Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.

A GUY THING

Chelsea West, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

MAX

Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, and Kew Gardens Cinema.

MORVERN CALLAR

Cinema Village.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

THE QUIET AMERICAN (11/25/02)

Lincoln Square and Village Theatre VII.

RABBIT-PROOF FENCE

Kew Gardens Cinema and Sunshine Cinema.

RIVERS AND TIDES: ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

WORKING WITH TIME

Film Forum.

SECRETARY (9/23/02)

Quad Cinema.

THE SON

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.

BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.

Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.

Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.

Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.

Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).

East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.

84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.

Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.

(398-3939).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.

Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave.

(727-8110).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.

42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.

Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd.,

Queens (718-441-9835).

Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.

(757-2280).

Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.

Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.

19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.

Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.

Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.

The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).

72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.

64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.

Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.

Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.

34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.

Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.

Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.

Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Jan. 26: A George A. Romero retrospective. Jan. 25 at 2: "Creepshow" (†). ♦ Jan. 25 at 4:15: "Monkey Shines: An Experiment in Fear" (1988). ♦ Jan. 26 at 2: "Two Evil Eyes" (1990). ♦ Jan. 26 at 4:15: "The Dark Half" (1993). ♦ Repertory nights. Jan. 25-26 at 6:30: "Alphaville" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Starting Jan. 24 at 1:30, 4:15, 7, and 9:30: "Rosemary's Baby" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL

55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Special event. Jan. 23 at 6:30: The film historian Thierry Frémaux introduces early films by the Lumière brothers. ♦ Jan. 23 at 8: "Round Midnight" (1985, Bertrand Tavernier). ♦ The cinematography of Raoul Coutard. Jan. 28 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Passion" (1982, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

GRAMERCY THEATRE

127 E. 23rd St. (777-4900)—Through Jan. 30: "Positif Champions: Fifty Years of Cinema," a celebration of the French film monthly. Jan. 23 at 2 and Jan. 25 at 8: "Mr. Arkadin" (1955, Orson Welles). ♦ Jan. 23 at 4:15: "The Mattei Affair" (1972, Francesco Rosi; in Italian). ♦ Jan. 23 at 7:30 and Jan. 24 at 4: "Time Regained" (1999, Raoul Ruiz; in French). ♦ Jan. 24 at 2 and Jan. 25 at 3:30: "Deep End" (1970, Jerzy Skolimowski). ♦ Jan. 24 at 7:30 and Jan. 28 at 2: "A Brighter Summer Day" (1992, Edward Yang; in Mandarin). ♦ Jan. 25 at 1: "Ed Wood" (1994, Tim Burton). ♦ Jan. 25 at 5:30 and Jan. 27 at 6: "Let Joy Reign Supreme" (1975, Bertrand Tavernier; in French). ♦ Jan. 26 at 1 and Jan. 28 at 6:15: "Drowning by Numbers" (1988, Peter Greenaway). ♦ Jan. 26 at 3:30: "Solaris" (1972, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian). ♦ Jan. 28 at 8:30: "Close-Up" (1990, Abbas Kiarostami; in Farsi). ♦ Special event: Lawrence Suid, the author of "Guts & Glory," a historical study of the "mutually exploitative" relationship between the U.S. military and Hollywood, introduces two films and discusses his work. Jan. 26 at 7: "A Submarine Pirate" (1915, Charles Avery and Syd Chaplin) and "The Unbeliever" (1918, Alan Crosland).

SUNSHINE CINEMA

139-143 E. Houston St. (358-0573)—Midnight movies. Jan. 24-25: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (1989, Steven Spielberg).

THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400)—"New Voices Since the Eighties." Jan. 25-26 at 5:30: "Fargo" (1996, Joel and Ethan Coen). ♦ Jan. 25-26 at 7:30: "The Man Who Wasn't There" (2001, the Coen brothers). ♦ Jan. 26 at 2: "Werckmeister Harmonies" (2001, Bela Tarr; in German and Hungarian).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Jan. 23: The New York Jewish Film Festival. ♦ Starting Jan. 24: "Soviet Sounds: Soviet Composers in the Cinema." All films are in Russian. Jan. 24 at 2 and 6:30 and Jan. 25 at 8:50: "Alexander Nevsky" (1938, Sergei Eisenstein; music by Sergei Prokofiev). ♦ Jan. 24 at 4:15 and 8:45: "Commissar" (1967, Aleksandr Askoldov; music by Alfred Schnittke). ♦ Jan. 25 at 1 and Jan. 26 at 7:30: "Ivan the Terrible, Part I" (1945, Eisenstein; music by Prokofiev). ♦ Jan. 25 at 3 and Jan. 26 at 9:30: "Ivan the Terrible, Part II" (1958, Eisenstein; music by Prokofiev). ♦ Jan. 25 at 5 and Jan. 27 at 4 and 9: "The Color of Pomegranates" (1969, Sergei Paradjanov; music by Tigran Mansurian). ♦ Jan. 25 at 6:45 and Jan. 28 at 4 and 9: "Uncle Vanya" (1970, Andrei Konchalovsky; music by Schnittke). ♦ Jan. 26 at 5 and Jan. 27 at 1:30: "Galina Ustvolskaya" and "Sofia Gubaidulina" (1994, Cherry Duyns and Reinbert de Leeuw).

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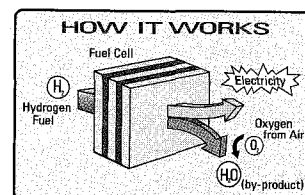


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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT WHAT'S UP, DOC?



The recent coup in the big marble palace on Capitol Hill turns out to have been a two-parter. Part One everybody knows about: just before Christmas, Trent Lott, of Mississippi, was forced out as the Republican leader of the Senate and replaced by Bill Frist, of Tennessee. It was a nice, clean trade-in, which not only substituted an attractive-seeming fellow for an unctuous incompetent but also changed the question of the day from "How come these guys are always pining for Jim Crow and white supremacy?" to "Isn't it reassuring that they got rid of that terrible man?" Part Two kicked in a couple of weeks ago, when the *Times* stopped referring to Lott's successor as Mr. Frist and started calling him Dr. Frist.

Like the switch from Lott to Frist, the switch from Mr. Frist to Dr. Frist was a canny move. "Dr." means "good." It means taking care of people, curing their illnesses, relieving their pain, binding up their wounds, saving their lives. It means honored, learned, respected. Its humanitarian glamour sprinkles fairy dust even on Doctors of Business Administration. Its positive associations earn "Dr. Evil" a laugh even from people who have never seen Mike Myers touch his pinkie to the corner of his mouth. So having a leader who's a

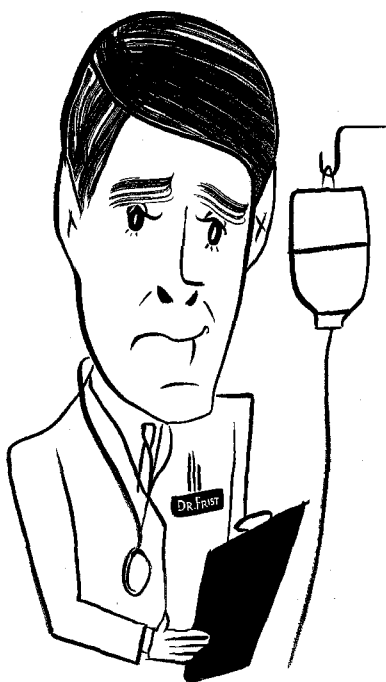
Dr. is a handy political prescription-drug plan for a party that is sometimes diagnosed as suffering from an eighty-year case of chronic compassion-deficiency syndrome, especially on "health-care issues."

Honorifics are something of an obsession at the *Times*, whose editors, having reflected deeply upon the subject, have codified their thoughts in "The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage." The entry on "courtesy titles" is one of the longest. The gist of it is that in the *Times* every living person gets his or her last name preceded by a title—usually Mr., Mrs., or Ms.—unless he or she is being written about in the sports

section or is a little kid or is a high-art legend (Pavarotti, for example) or has a goofy stage name like Meat Loaf. (The style book thinks it would be "overliteral" to call him Mr. Loaf.) The *Times* used to take the "Mr." away from anyone convicted of a felony, but that policy had to be dropped during the Watergate era, when the criminal classes and the ruling classes began to merge.

"Physicians' or dentists' titles should be used in all references," the style book directs. That's the plain language of the statute, but the justices of the Supreme Desk evidently interpret "all references" to mean "all references to physicians and dentists acting in a medical or dental capacity." The late Graham Chapman, of Monty Python's Flying Circus, was a physician, but he was always Mr. Chapman in the *Times*. Michael Crichton, M.D. and author, and Charles Krauthammer, M.D. and columnist, are mostly Messrs. Jonathan Miller, M.D., director, author, and pioneering sketch comedian ("Beyond the Fringe"), is sometimes Mr. Miller, as when he's staging an opera, and sometimes Dr. Miller, as when he's lecturing on neurology, his medical specialty.

Is there a doctor in the House? There are eight, actually, plus three dentists, but the *Times* seldom gives them their medical honorific. The Senate has just the one, unless you count veterinarians, too, in which case it has three. (Wayne Allard, Republican of Colorado, is a good man to see about a horse. So is John Ensign, Republican of Nevada.) As for the new Majority Leader, in the hundred or so stories



Bill Frist

about him that the *Times* published before January 5th of this year Mr. Frist was beating Dr. Frist by a two-to-one margin. Since then, it's been Dr. Frist all the way.

Certainly, there's no disputing his entitlement to the title. He was still performing heart transplants during the Clinton Administration. In 2001, he attended to a colleague, Strom Thurmond, who had collapsed on the Senate floor. (Mr. Lott, therefore, has Dr. Frist to thank that he was able to keep a speaking engagement at Mr. Thurmond's hundredth-birthday celebration.) And on New Year's Day just past, while on vacation in Florida, Frist happened on the scene of a gruesome auto accident and, as a press release from his office put it, "assisted with the intubation and resuscitation of three individuals."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, of New York, and Phil Gramm, of Texas, are doctors, too, and their doctorates—in sociology and economics, respectively—were highly pertinent to their legislative duties. (Now that they have retired, there are no more senatorial Ph.D.s, just the three sawbones.) The *Times* kept them in mufti all the same. Martin Luther King's degree was in theology, a field directly relevant to the work of a spirit-filled leader of Christian nonviolence, so it made sense for the newspaper of record to style him Dr. King. Benjamin Spock, M.D., who ran for President in 1972 as a third-party

peace candidate, was always Dr. Spock. He was a pediatrician, not a Vulcan.

The most famous political doctor of them all, Henry Kissinger, is a special case. Dr. or Mr.? On the one hand, he's not a "real" doctor. On the other hand, his degree is in government, which passes the relevancy test. On the one hand, in what sounds a little like a twitch of Ivy League reverse snobbery, he once told the *Times*, which tries to accommodate people's wishes in such matters, that he preferred to be called Mr. Kissinger, so that's what the *Times* always calls him. (Well, nine times out of ten.) On the other hand, just about all the other papers that use honorifics call him Dr., and the secretaries in all his offices have always answered the phone, "Dr. Kissinger's office." On the one hand—oh, never mind. Let the International Criminal Court sort it out.

In any event, with the promotion of Frist in both the Senate and the *Times*, the Republicans have now opened up a doctor gap. One probable result will be a shortening of the odds against Howard Dean, the former governor of Vermont, who is running for the Democratic Presidential nomination. Though he is a family practitioner who still occasionally saw patients when he was governor, his Dr./Mr. ratio in the *Times* is an alarmingly low one to three. Paging Dr. Dean. Call the copy desk.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

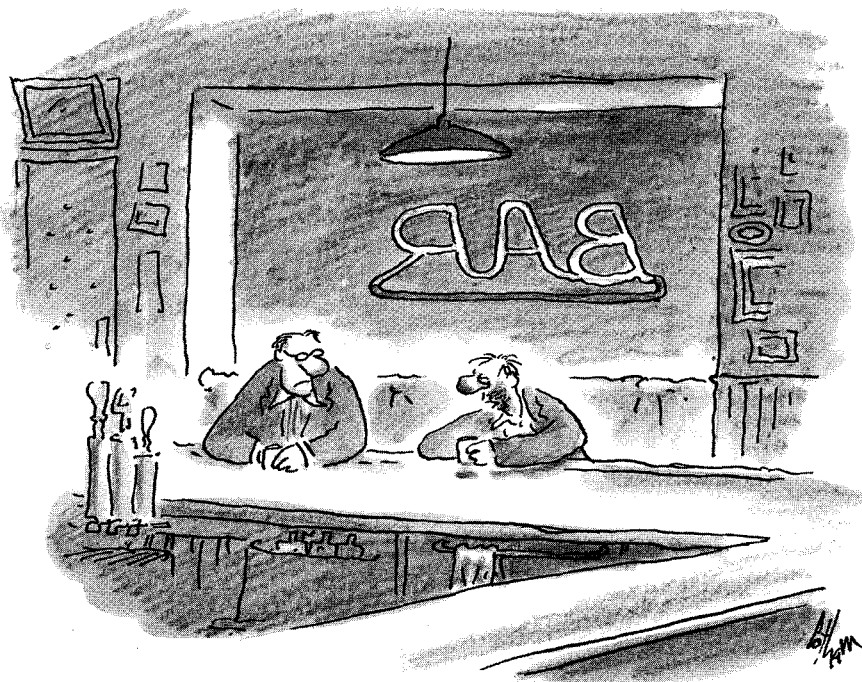
INK THE CODE



Speaking of the *Times*, fourteen years ago, when Steven Crist was covering horse racing for the paper, *Sports Illustrated* ran a photograph of him posing at a wagering window fumbling with a wad of cash. Crist liked to play the horses as well as write about them. In his view, he had nothing to hide: if you weren't betting, you weren't paying attention.

A colleague of Crist's from the business section of the *Times* saw the *Sports Illustrated* story and lodged a complaint with his editors. It seemed that Crist might be capitalizing on inside information that had been gathered in the *Times'* good name. Crist was summoned to the office of Max Frankel, the executive editor, to explain himself. Crist asserted that in horse racing there is no such thing as inside information: what one learns in the stables is available to all. After several weeks, the matter faded away. Frankel remembers that he directed Crist to stop playing the horses, but Crist felt that it was all right to keep betting—and he did, with the understanding that perhaps in the future he might consider exercising better discretion.

Crist's experience came to mind last week when the *Times* issued a revised code of conduct for its news and editorial departments, a fifty-two-page document portentously titled "Ethical Journalism." Three years in the making, this set of guidelines governing what reporters, columnists, and editors may or may not do, accept, join, advocate, invest in, or appear at is so thorough that even the index, with its six pages of entries such as "code of ethics, purpose of," "news sources, romantic involvement with," "meals, accepting, guidelines for," and "information, false," is enough to make a man consider a career in public relations. The index entry for "gambling" directs you to Article 131, which states, "To avoid an appearance of bias, no member of the sports department may gamble on any sports event, except for the occasional recreational wagering on horse racing (or dog racing or jai alai). This exception does not



"My heart is healthy, but my liver is shot to hell."

apply to staff members who cover such racing or regularly edit that coverage.”

So there it is, in black and white: what Crist got away with in 1989 wouldn't fly in 2003. The same goes for many other long-standing gray-area scenarios. The new code is stricter and more explicit than its predecessors, addressing, as it must, a changed world of power couples, hot I.P.O.s, and escalating hostilities over accusations of ideological bias.

Here's what you learn in “Ethical Journalism”: Staff members may not hold public office or wear campaign buttons or attend political rallies. Members of the culture staff who collect objects of art must annually submit a list of their acquisitions to the associate managing editor for news administration. Reporters and editors can't own individual stocks that might pertain to their beats, and editors who determine the placement and display of business and financial news cannot own individual stocks at all (other than New York Times Company stock, of course). The same goes for editors and writers on the editorial page. The stock holdings and political activities of husbands and wives can also create serious conflicts of interest, or, worse, the appearance of them—as Article 2 states, “Our first duty is to make sure the integrity of the Times is not blemished during our stewardship”—but the rules on spouses are vague. (Generally, you get the impression that it would be best not to have one.) There is also this, about free food: “A simple buffet of muffins and coffee at a news conference, for example, is harmless.”

As commonsensical and salutary as so much of this is, one comes away from reading the document with a renewed sense of wonderment at the *Times*' vision of itself. “Ethical Journalism” is suffused with a deep suspicion of commerce, depicting journalists as a priestly class that must remain unsullied by the squalid affairs of ordinary men and women. It's no small task, being the paper of record, but such pronouncements as “journalists have no place on the playing fields of politics” can seem as disingenuous as they are well intentioned.

(Full disclosure: This correspondent receives the *Times* at home every morning, in his spouse's name. He also counts among his acquaintances a handful of *Times* staff members, though he has never participated in a regular game of golf or cards with them—Article 23. He has, however, often invoked the *Times*' name in pri-

vate activities, in violation of Article 60.)

Of a half-dozen *Times* staff members contacted, none had read the thing yet. They were busy putting out the paper. Felicity Barringer, who covers the newspaper industry, couldn't really talk. “You're not going to believe this,” Barringer said, “but I'm conflicted. My husband was one of the drafters of the code.” Her husband is Philip Taubman, the deputy editorial-page editor, who, along with William E. Schmidt, the associate managing editor for news administration, is cited throughout the document (by title, not name) as the go-to arbiter for the many scenarios that would call for consultation rather than decree. (The actual writing of the document was handled by Fred Andrews, a retired business-page editor.) “We chose to err on the side of providing too many rules and regulations,” Taubman said. “Some might say the *Times* is overzealous in this, but I don't think you can be too overzealous. At the end of the day, though, what it makes clear is that if you're at all unsure you should consult with your supervisor.”

Steve Crist left the *Times* in 1990 and is now the publisher of the *Daily Racing Form*, and his policy is to encourage his reporters and handicappers to bet on the horses. As for the new code at the *Times*, he would count himself in the too-overzealous faction. “One hopes that a newspaper doesn't employ liars and criminals as reporters and columnists,” he said last week. “I think this is a little silly.”

—Nick Paumgarten

FUNNY BOY TOO HOT TO HOOT



Demetri Martin is a dark-eyed twenty-nine-year-old from the Jersey Shore with a mop of black hair and a forceful nose. He is a palindromist, an anagrammatist, an amateur inventor, and, most visibly these days, an ascendant comedian. (He has performed on “Late Show with David Letterman” and “Late Night with Conan O'Brien,” and appears for about thirty seconds in “Analyze That.”) In his shows, he likes to rearrange the letters of his name: he is, he says, a “mired, trite man.” Another permutation

of his name sometimes occurs to him on seeing well-proportioned members of the opposite sex: “Trim T-'n'-A, ride me.” Demetri's most daring reshuffling to date may be a work that he calls “All the Words Printed on a Bottle of Rolling Rock Beer in a Different Order,” which reads, in part:

Women, your ability to operate extra
tender springs from birth.
Good machinery comes as your contents
cause enjoyment.
Cash, beer, a car: rock and rolling.
During “it,” the general warning:
“We may risk pregnancy according to old
problems.”

During Demetri's junior year of college, at Yale, he began composing “Dammit, I'm Mad,” which he believes is one of the longest, non-computer-generated,



Demetri Martin

sensmaking palindromes in English. (It's a monologue in the voice of an alcoholic mailman, a narrative frame that does allow Demetri some liberties, such as “Ew, a spider... eh?” which mirrors letters embedded in an earlier phrase, “Elsewhere dips a web.”) The poem originated in a fractals class. It was a hundred and fifty words long, and the professor was so excited by it that he sent it to Benoit Mandelbrot, the Polish-born fractician. Since then, the poem has grown to two hundred and twenty-three words; it has multiple internal palindromes, on the level of the line, the sentence, and the individual word.

Demetri grew up doing puzzle books

in class, working at his parents' souvlaki stand, and performing in his church's Greek-dance troupe. After Yale, he went to law school for a while but dropped out to do standup. He started out doing long-winded absurdist narratives, but his style has evolved, and now he favors the stringently economical joke. As in: "I am twenty-nine and I am into skateboarding. There's a shorter way to say that—I don't have a girlfriend." On the Letterman show last April, he told what was then his shortest joke: "The other day I went to the zoo looking for a job/girlfriend/pretzel." Now he has an even shorter one: "I think it's interesting that 'cologne' rhymes with 'alone.'"

The other night, Demetri was given the fourth of seven slots in a lineup of comics performing at a weekly experimental showcase at Luna Lounge, on Ludlow Street. He made his way toward the stage through an unforgiving crowd of standing, stubbly, eyeglasses-wearing people. He had on a hooded sweatshirt and a baseball hat, and his beard was unfashionably full. As he reached the stage and prepared for the m.c.'s introduction, a voice from the sound booth interrupted: "We're going to flip four and seven."

"What is this, a casino?" the m.c. asked. "What do you mean, flip four and seven?"

"No. 4 is going to go last, and No. 7 is going now. Seven is on 'Curb Your Enthusiasm.'" The sound of a lot of people saying "*Awww*" went up around the room.

"Demetri will be on, please calm down," the m.c. said. "The Greek boy will be on to entertain all the alt girls." Demetri retreated, abashed. "Look at the sensitive Greek man," the m.c. said. "He's the entertainer of the heart."

A few comics later, Demetri returned to the stage. There were some unmistakably soprano cheers and one *tu-whit, tu-whoo* whistle as he began to assemble his props: a Casio keyboard playing a shimmering three-note song reminiscent of Henry Mancini's "Pink Panther" theme, and a child-size acoustic guitar, plugged into a pair of small speakers. Ten minutes went by, as he fumbled and apologized and cultivated awkwardness and held the audience's attention completely. He told a few jokes. One of them was brand new: "I think Employee of the Month is a good example of when a person can be a winner and a loser at the same time."

—Dana Goodyear

POWER & LIGHT WIND SHIFT



It's easy to sell a lot of things in New York, but for a while now it's been very difficult to sell wind, which is to say electricity that comes from giant, futuristic-looking windmills. This is a little surprising, given that (1) there is an awful lot of wind here—New York City is practically an archipelago, after all; (2) guards at Indian Point, the local nuclear power plant, recently admitted that they were worried about being physically overpowered by terrorists; and (3) driving a Cadillac Escalade through the canyons of Manhattan isn't getting any cheaper. The fact is, people like the idea of wind power, but they don't want the towering turbines anywhere near them or, especially, anywhere near their summer homes.

But now the wind-power wind is changing, because this week the Long Island Power Authority will begin looking for a developer to build an offshore wind-energy farm—thirty or more three-hundred-foot-tall turbines planted a quarter of a mile apart and about two miles off Jones Beach. It would be the first offshore wind platform in the country. And it dovetails nicely with Governor Pataki's directive, in his State of the State address the other day, that New York, within the next ten years, get at least twenty-five per cent of its electricity "from renewable energy resources like solar power, wind power, or fuel cells." There are three small wind farms upstate, but Long Island, the geographic equivalent of an arm stuck out of a car window, is a wind farmer's dream.

Three years ago, the Long Island Power Authority proposed to erect a pair of hundred-foot-tall wind turbines at Camp Hero, an abandoned military station and Superfund site on the bluffs of Montauk. But environmentalists who argued that the turbines would mar the landscape triumphed over environmentalists who said that wind power was better than nukes. To date, no organized protest of LIPA's new plan has surfaced, but a similar project designed for the waters off Cape Cod has not gone over well with real-estate groups and the Hu-

mane Society, which is predicting a grisly bird-blender effect. If the first LIPA wind turbines work and the entire stretch of shoreline—from Long Beach to Montauk—is developed, the project could generate enough power to satisfy seventy-seven per cent of Long Island's energy needs.

Before launching its offshore plan, the power authority sought out locals who were willing to have a turbine built on their property in exchange for credit on their electric bills. There weren't many takers. The first person to sign up was a man named Elmer Zeh, who may be the most laconic accidental activist ever to stand up for clean, renewable power. Zeh, who is seventy-six, owns a farm in Calverton, Long Island, and to get there from Manhattan you drive through the Midtown Tunnel, past the area in Queens where Zeh's grandfather farmed until 1908, and then you sit on the Long Island Expressway for a couple of hours until you come to Exit 71. Look for the Windy Acres Farm Stand, and then hang a right onto a dirt road. You can't miss the hundred-foot-tall wind turbine. Compared with the proposed offshore towers, it is small, but people in the area are noticing, and, so far, aren't minding. "Nope," a horse-feed salesclerk said when she was asked if she was bothered by the view.

Zeh drops by the tower every now and then. He doesn't have much time for people who say the turbines are ugly. "They don't know what the hell they're talking about," he said. In fact, he wants another one. He likes the twenty-year lease and the three thousand dollars in annual electricity credits. His turbine can supply enough energy for ten homes. "Look at it this way," he said. "People are very—well, they're not very subject to change. But with all these big houses going up on Long Island you gotta have juice for 'em. They all got air-conditioning!" (Zeh does not have air-conditioning—doesn't see the need.)

Zeh added that this is the second time wind power has come to his farm, proving that if you stay in one place long enough you get to see the old technologies come back around. The first windmill, a rusty Erector set of a thing, began decomposing in the late forties, after electricity came. "You know, you use what you got," he said. "But that's too simple, I guess."

—Robert Sullivan

THE FINANCIAL PAGE THE CULTURE EXCUSE

From the moment, three years ago, that America Online and Time Warner announced that they were merging, pundits and analysts warned that the biggest difficulty facing the new company was an inevitable "clash of cultures": unfettered New Economy pioneers versus buttoned-up old-media statesmen. To succeed, Gerald Levin and Stephen Case, the merger's architects, would have to be corporate Titos, creating a unified whole out of radically different parts. So when the merger failed to deliver on its promise—Case, the last man standing, resigned as chairman a week ago—one widespread interpretation was that cultural differences had trumped business fundamentals.

The idea that success and a strong corporate culture go hand in hand dates back to the early twentieth century, when I.B.M. employees sang songs at conventions and sales meetings in order to instill, as the preface to the company songbook put it, "the fine spirit of loyal coöperation and good fellowship which has promoted the signal success of our great I.B.M. Corporation." The men in suits sang, "We're Watson's great crew, we're loyal and true / We're proud of our job and we never feel blue." Around the same time, as the historian Roland Marchand has pointed out, companies like General Motors urged employees to identify with the corporation the way a man might with his nation or family.

It wasn't until the early nineteen-eighties, though, that promoting corporate culture became an industry unto itself, when C.E.O.s, struggling to deal with foreign competition and subpar performance, seized on culture as a solution to their problems. Ever since, consulting firms in this line (*Fortune* once called them "corporate culture vultures") have advised companies on how to identify "cultural needs," strengthen "core values," and create "corporate celebration" rituals, by, say, playing Patti LaBelle's "New Attitude" at company gatherings. C.E.O.s look enviously at Hewlett-Packard's legendary "H.P. Way," an ethos reflected in parables about the company founders. And many corporations still have an-

them, such as the PriceWaterhouse Coopers classic "Your World": "We don't sell no dogma. / What we got is skill. / PriceWaterhouse Coopers / For each and every client's will."

Curiously, there's little evidence that such employee identity politics really work. One major academic survey of the relationship between culture and business performance, in fact, declared that "the statement 'Strong cultures create excellent performance' appears to be just plain wrong." Culture is important, but so are strategy, technology, and real assets. The challenge at AOL Time Warner was not so much making sure that the two sides played nice as it was justifying the company's hyped-up market valuation.



To do that, it needed to come up with a convincing strategy for melding Time Warner's stable of media properties with AOL's distribution network (which was, after all, the reason for the deal). And this is what Levin and Case failed to do.

No one will claim that the two sides of AOL Time Warner didn't clash early and often. The posturing of AOL executives, with their rhetoric about injecting "Internet DNA" into the company, played badly with their new colleagues. "These people were beyond arrogant," one Time Warner executive said last week. "They had this intolerable holier-than-thou attitude, running around with these Superman complexes, talking about AOL, AOL, AOL everywhere, and promising to save us, when we knew

our businesses didn't need saving." Then, there was a tax-bracket problem. Many of the AOL executives were enormously wealthy, far richer than their new Time Warner colleagues, because AOL's stock had risen three thousand per cent between 1996 and the day the merger was announced, in 2000. The disparity was an unspoken presence at every meeting, sometimes even a spoken presence: one Time Warner executive recalled an AOL executive ending an argument by saying, "Well, I'm worth a hundred million dollars, so the truth is I just don't really care." But all this Jets-and-Sharks knife play wouldn't have mattered a whit if Case and Levin had been able to deliver on the promises they had made. Success has a way of smoothing over differences.

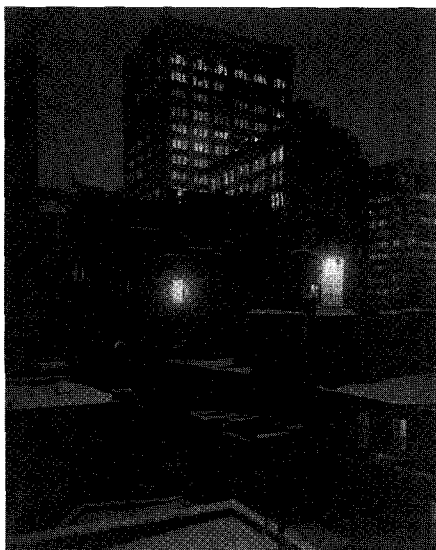
Consider Time Warner itself. Born out of a traumatic merger between Time Inc. and Warner Communications, Time Warner never developed a unified corporate culture. Instead, it was a decentralized collection of fiefdoms run by men whose backbiting and infighting were legendary. It was also, after some rocky years, very successful. Cultural unity, it turns out, doesn't matter so much when you have HBO and *People* and eleven million cable subscribers.

In the end, Jerry Levin, Bob Pittman, and Steve Case didn't fall victim to any conflict between the arrogance of AOL and the fustiness of Time Warner. They fell victim to history, by betting on an AOL-centric future that hasn't materialized. (It may someday, but for their purposes someday is too late.) In the years after the merger was announced, the Internet bubble burst, the Net advertising market dried up, AOL's subscriber growth slowed to almost nothing, its profits fell by a billion dollars, and millions of people started using broadband, where AOL scarcely has a toehold. Those facts would have doomed Case and Levin even if they had figured out how to get all their employees singing the same tune. Sure, culture makes a difference, but, as Tom Peters, who helped popularize the idea, has said, "The corporate-culture thing has been so simplified, cheapened, bastardized." The synergy gurus at AOL Time Warner have now taken their leave. Perhaps the culture gurus will follow suit.

—James Surowiecki

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Siegelitz, Alfred (1864-1946) From the Window of 291. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Siegelitz Collection, 1949.

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LETTER FROM CAMBRIDGE

SPEECHLESS

Free expression and civility clash at Harvard.

BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

At the beginning of November, Rita Goldberg was among the members of the Harvard academic community to receive a routine e-mail announcement of a poetry reading—not, at first glance, the sort of thing to reawaken the somewhat musty issue of free speech on campus. The e-mail said merely that Tom Paulin, an Irish poet, would give a poetry reading, known as the Morris Gray Lecture, on November 14th.

Goldberg occupies a humble professional niche at the university. She is a non-tenured lecturer in the literature concentration, which itself is a poor cousin to the larger and more powerful Department of English and American Literature and Language, the sponsor of the Paulin lecture. “I had lived in England for many years,” Goldberg told me, “and I knew Paulin’s work. He’s on television all the time there, and I knew the kind of things he had said about Israel. I put his name in Google, and it didn’t take long to see just how bad it was.”

Goldberg herself had little clout, but she knew a good deal about how universities worked and possessed some proximity to real power at Harvard. Her husband is Oliver Hart, the chairman of the Economics Department, and, as it happened, he was the host of the department’s annual dinner, at the Fogg Art Museum on Thursday, November 7th. Among the guests was Lawrence H. Summers, the president of Harvard, who had been a member of the Economics Department in the years before he went to Washington, where he ultimately became Secretary of the Treasury under President Clinton. Goldberg sought out Summers at the dinner and informed him of the invitation to Paulin. “I told him about Paulin’s views,” Goldberg recalled, “and he said, ‘That sounds pretty bad,’ but then he also said, ‘Be careful. This is a free-speech issue, too.’”

The following morning, six days be-

fore Paulin was to speak, Goldberg sent an e-mail to Lawrence Buell, the chairman of the English Department. “Dear Larry,” she began, “I’m writing in response to your invitation to come hear Tom Paulin on November 14. I assume that the people who selected him for the Morris Gray Lecture know about the reputation he has recently made for himself in the U.K., not only because of his poem ‘Killed in Crossfire,’ but also because of statements he has made in the press and on television.” Goldberg quoted an interview that Paulin had given to *Al-Abram Weekly*, an English-language newspaper in Cairo, in April. “That interview is notorious for several remarks,” Goldberg wrote, “especially the closing one, in which he refers to Jewish settlers on the West Bank: ‘They should be shot dead. I think they are Nazis, racists. I feel nothing but hatred for them.’” She also included a copy of the poem:

We’re fed this inert
this lying phrase
like comfort food
as another little Palestinian boy
in trainers jeans and a white teshirt
is gunned down by the Zionist SS
whose initials we should
—but we don’t—dumb goys
clock in that weasel word
crossfire

She noted further, “I’m reluctant to intrude on anyone’s right to free speech or free access. But in the minds of many thoughtful people both in England and here in the U.S., Paulin’s vitriolic attacks have crossed a certain boundary between civilized discourse and something much more sinister. You ought at least to attach a warning label to your announcement of the reading.”

Buell and Goldberg exchanged e-mails over the Veterans Day weekend, and the department chairman said he had known nothing about Paulin’s political views. The invitation had been made

nearly a year earlier, by a committee of three English professors—Helen Vendler, the chair, and two poetry professors, Jorie Graham and Peter Sacks. (Paulin was invited after the publication of the “Crossfire” poem but before his interview with *Al-Abram*.) As Goldberg recalled, “I suggested two things to Larry—that they disinvite him or at

partment should do about the invitation to Paulin. As most people at Harvard know, New, a forty-four-year-old American-literature scholar, has been dating Summers, who is forty-eight, for more than a year. However, New had the same answer for everyone who asked about the president’s views. “If you want to know what Larry Summers thinks,

ionated mode, one notably hostile to campus pieties. Many have welcomed the return of a Harvard president to national debates, but there is little question, too, that Summers has sometimes been ill-served by his own pugnacity. For instance, an early confrontation with the Afro-American Studies scholar Cornel West (the precise nature of which remains in



There is little question that Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard, has sometimes been ill-served by his own pugnacity.

least that they disclose what he’d said about Israel.” Goldberg sent a version of her e-mail to a friend at Harvard’s Hillel, the campus Jewish organization, urging the group to join her protest to the English Department. That e-mail, in turn, was forwarded to friends around and beyond the university.

The reaction to the news about Paulin illustrated, in a small way, a larger truth—that conservatives have become Israel’s most passionate supporters in the United States. Denunciations of the invitation to the poet began surfacing among several conservative Internet bloggers—among them Andrew Sullivan and *opinionjournal.com*, the online counterpart to the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. As a result, over the long weekend waves of e-mail protests about the poetry reading fell down on members of the English Department. “It spread like wildfire,” Goldberg said.

Struggling in the unfamiliar realm of public controversy, several faculty members in the English Department had the same idea—to talk to their colleague Elisa New. Specifically, they wanted to ask her what Summers thought the de-

you should ask Larry Summers,” she said. So, on Monday night, Lawrence Buell called Summers to ask him what to do.

The president of Harvard works in an elegant, if snug, suite of offices on the ground floor of Massachusetts Hall, a brick building nestled in the Yard. (The top floors of Mass Hall are a freshman dormitory.) In appearance, Summers has never betrayed his academic roots; his outfit on the morning I met with him included a tweed jacket, an open-necked shirt, and casual pants, all in clashing shades of blue. He propped his feet, which were shod in brown work shoes with thick rubber soles, on a glass coffee table, and talked about academic freedom. A big, shambling man, Summers has a provocative conversational style, which seems to involve disagreeing with every proposition that is put to him. For many at Harvard, that style, like Summers himself, has been unnerving.

Since Summers became Harvard’s twenty-seventh president, in 2001, he has rejected the reticent, university-focussed manner of his predecessor, Neil Rudenstine, in favor of a broader and more opin-

dispute) led to West’s decampment, last summer, for Princeton. On most issues, Summers, as an economist, is given to a straightforward weighing of pros and cons, and that includes free speech.

“There is enormously broad latitude for people to be able to invite people who they wish to the Harvard campus, for them to be able to be heard without disruption, and for there not to be censorship,” Summers told me. “That is the premise on which successful research universities operate, and it’s basically a policy that works because of the fallibility of human judgment.” Summers went on to say that there are times when it probably would be sensible to censor speech “but no one is smart enough or wise enough to be the censor. Anytime one has an urge to censor something, one needs to think that there are plenty of people who thought advocacy of gay rights was a superb idea for censorship, that criticism of the Vietnam War, or advocacy of Marxist notions, was a superb notion for censorship. It is central to the kind of community we are that censorship not be a part of what the community is.”

In light of these beliefs, one might as-

sume that Summers would have a simple view of the invitation to Paulin: let him speak. But Summers himself has been especially outspoken on the subject of Israel and anti-Semitism, so it was not surprising that the chairman of the English Department wanted to take his pulse. In a widely noted speech on September 17th, Summers took to the pulpit of Memorial Church, the symbolic center of the university, and said, "I speak with you today not as president of the university but as a concerned member of our community about something I never thought I would become seriously worried about—the issue of anti-Semitism." Harvard's first Jewish president—"identified but hardly devout," as he described himself—said that anti-Semitism had been remote from his own experience, but "there is disturbing evidence of an upturn in anti-Semitism globally." Moreover, he continued, "profoundly anti-Israel views are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual communities. Serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent." As examples, Summers cited European academics who shun contact with Israeli colleagues, the eviction of Israeli scholars from an international literary journal, and the demands for universities to remove from their investment portfolios companies that do business with Israel. Summers had never heard of Tom Paulin before November, but it appeared that the poet was just the kind of anti-Semite—in effect, if not in intent—that the university president had targeted in his speech.

Buell and Summers spoke on the night of Veterans Day, but there is some dispute about what the Harvard president said. Both Buell and a person familiar with Summers's recollection of the conversation agree that Summers had both an official answer and a personal response to the Paulin invitation. "As president of the university, my judgment is that the English Department should do what it sees fit to do and thinks is best in the situation," Summers said. But Buell and the Summers camp disagree about what else the president said. Summers, according to the person familiar with his

version, thought the idea that no one knew about Paulin's views was preposterous, even if it happened to be true. Second, Summers thought it would look bad to withdraw the invitation. But, third, if the reading did go forward, the department should find a way to dissociate itself from Paulin's views about Israel. Buell took issue with this characterization of Summers's statement but declined to elaborate. Clearly, though, whatever Summers's intent, he succeeded in leaving a mixed message with Buell—one in keeping with the one that the Harvard president left around this time with William C. Kirby, the dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, that the Paulin matter had kicked up "kind of a shit storm."



Generations of Harvard freshmen once took their meals at the stolid brick pile known as the Union, but the old McKim, Mead & White structure has recently been renovated into the Barker Center for the Humanities, and on Tuesday morning, November 12th, the offices of the English Department there were the center of the shit storm. As Robert Kiely, a longtime faculty member and former chairman of the department, recalled, "Over that long weekend, we got an avalanche of messages and e-mail raising the question as to how could the English Department invite such a person. The quote in the Cairo newspaper—'They should all be shot'—that was the key statement."

Before deciding what to do—Paulin was due to arrive in Cambridge the following day and to speak on Thursday—the committee on the Gray Lecture, Vendler, Graham, and Sacks, could at least share some rueful laughter. Faculty members who never came to poetry readings were vowing to shun this one, too. By the standards of Harvard's English Department, the Gray Lecture was a modest honor, which provided the speaker with only travel expenses and a small honorarium. At least, the committee members noted glumly, they were likely to improve on the average of seventy or so people who usually showed up for poetry readings. Mostly, though, the members started answering a question that had suddenly become ubiquitous in Cam-

bridge: Who the hell was Tom Paulin?

Paulin is a fifty-three-year-old Irishman, a professor at Oxford University, who was spending the fall as a visiting professor at Columbia. He is a popular poet in England, where his work is widely praised and frequently anthologized. "Our committee deemed Paulin an important voice in contemporary Anglo-Irish poetry, and one that might be usefully added to the chorus of other voices reading at Harvard this year," Jorie Graham told me. Paulin has also sought to extend his franchise beyond poetry by becoming a familiar face of the political left outside the academic world, particularly on British television and radio. In his poetry, as well as in his literary criticism, Paulin often writes about politics, especially the Irish struggle against English occupation. Indeed, his views on Israel and Palestine form a kind of proxy for his views on England and Ireland—oppressor and victim, occupier and dispossessed. Though Paulin has over the years spoken out against anti-Semitism, notably in an essay about T. S. Eliot, his virulent hostility to Israel, if not his precise language, reflects a common view among many European intellectuals.

But, without a Rita Goldberg stirring up trouble at Columbia, Paulin had enjoyed a quiet, almost protest-free fall teaching a course on Irish literature. "He was a terrific colleague—responsive, engaged, open-minded," James Shapiro, a professor of English at Columbia, said. "On the last day of class, after the Harvard story broke, a couple of students entered his class and started yelling about Israel. His students whipped out their cell phones and called security and then shoved the protesters out the door. You have to admire a teacher who commands that kind of loyalty."

Vendler, who had extended the invitation, had failed to reach Paulin over the weekend, so on Tuesday morning she tried him again. Vendler is one of Harvard's few University Professors, an elite within an elite, and an eminent literary critic of the old school, and she was plainly uncomfortable in the political maelstrom. (Declining to discuss the Paulin matter, she left me a message saying, with some disgust, "I write about poetry . . . , I don't write about chain letters.") As Graham recalled the events of that day, "We thought it would be a

good idea to widen the scope of the event to include a question-and-answer session, or some kind of discussion, perhaps involving poetry and politics, or regarding the nature and effects of different kinds of 'speech.' We decided to ask Paulin—as he had only been invited to read from his work—whether he wished to include such an exchange after his reading." Vendler finally reached Paulin at Columbia, and after a short discussion they decided he would not speak at all at Harvard on November 14th. Graham then called him and expressed her sorrow about the whole situation. "He"—Paulin—"said he was very sorry, but had 'no stomach for it.' He said he was tired of this whole thing, and that he just wanted some time while at Columbia—where he felt very comfortable—to get some work done," Graham said.

In his conversation with Vendler, Paulin agreed that the English Department would announce that the decision about the lecture had been made "by mutual consent." But consent to what? Paulin declined to discuss the matter, and he told friends that he had agreed only to a postponement of his appearance, not a cancellation. Vendler and the others on the committee have said that they, too, believed Paulin would ultimately give the reading. On that Tuesday, Buell posted an announcement on the English Department's Web site saying, "By mutual consent of the poet and the English Department, the Morris Gray poetry reading by Tom Paulin originally scheduled for Thursday November 14 will not take place. The English Department sincerely regret [*sic*] the widespread consternation that has arisen as a result of this invitation, which had been originally decided on last winter solely on the basis of Mr. Paulin's lifetime accomplishment as a poet." There was no suggestion that Paulin's lecture would ever take place.

That, at least initially, seemed fine with just about everyone at Harvard. Summers praised the English Department's decision. "My position was that it was for the department to decide," he said in a statement, "and I believe the department has come to the appropriate decision." Rita Goldberg, the unlikely initiator of the controversy, was astonished and delighted by the success of her electronic "chain letter." She said, "This

was an honor for Paulin. Do you want to give this man this honor, when he has this history? This was an actual call to murder people. It's not a joke in wartime. Someone might take him up on it. It's incitement." As for Paulin himself, he had disavowed his call for the murder of the settlers months earlier, in a letter to the *Telegraph* of London. Since returning to Oxford in December, he has limited his public comments to a self-pitying poem, "On Being Dealt the Anti-Semitic Card," published in January in the *London Review of Books*, which referred to "the ones who play the a-s card—/ of death threats hate mail talking tough / the usual cynical Goebbels stuff."

Controversial speakers have been coming to Harvard for decades, and over the years there have been occasional unpleasant incidents, most memorably in 1966, when Robert McNamara, then Secretary of Defense, was noisily confronted during the Vietnam War. But Yasir Arafat, Malcolm X, the Shah of Iran, and scores of others have all spoken without incident. As Charles Fried, a professor at Harvard Law School, observed, "We've had Fidel Castro here, we've had Al Sharpton, we've had monsters, charlatans, and scoundrels." So why not Tom Paulin?

Fried had served as Solicitor General in the Reagan Administration and as a Republican appointee to the Massachu-

setts Supreme Judicial Court, and the Paulin matter roused his libertarian instincts. "I heard they were withdrawing the invitation because it caused 'consternation,'" Fried told me. "The reason that was given is they were disinviting him because people didn't like what he'd said. There's a difference between what you decide to listen to and what you silence. This is silencing."

Fried wrote a letter to the editor of the *Crimson*, the campus newspaper, and he recruited two law-school colleagues from a different end of the political spectrum, Alan M. Dershowitz and Laurence H. Tribe, to sign it with him. "By all accounts this Paulin fellow the English Department invited to lecture here is a despicable example of the anti-Semitic and/or anti-Israel posturing unfortunately quite widespread among European intellectuals," Fried wrote. "What is truly dangerous is the precedent of withdrawing an invitation because a speaker would cause, in the words of English department chair Lawrence Buell, 'consternation and divisiveness.'... If Paulin had spoken, we are sure we would have found ways to tell him and each other what we think of him. Now he will be able to lurk smugly in his Oxford lair and sneer at America's vaunted traditions of free speech. There are some mistakes which are only made worse by trying to undo them."

The law professors' letter—along with the controversy—prompted the English



"That's amazing—I was just thinking the same thing."

Department to call a meeting for the following Tuesday, to discuss the Paulin invitation. "The department, rightly, felt it has been misrepresented by the notion—untrue—that Paulin, because of statements and views attributed to him on the Internet, and then somehow distributed to selected media over the weekend, had been 'disinvited' by us," Jorie Graham said. At the meeting, on November 19th, the thirty to forty senior and junior faculty members voted to reaffirm their own prerogatives. As Robert Kiely, the former department chair, recalled, "There was a unanimous reassertion that departments should be autonomous, free to invite whom they wish. And, after a long discussion, despite the unpleasantness of his views it was unanimous with two abstentions that the department should reinstate its invitation." So far, Paulin hasn't said whether he will come to Harvard after all.

It wasn't surprising that a group of law professors helped nudge the English Department to change its mind. After all, lawyers are trained to spot potential threats to freedom of speech, but this group of professors had special reason to raise their antennae. At the time of the Paulin controversy, the law school had been struggling for several months with its own problem with freedom of speech. This one, too, moved at Internet speed, and it, too, fed on enduring political animosities. Unlike the Paulin saga, however, the would-be censors at Harvard Law School came from the political left.

Throughout the nineteen-eighties and early nineties, the law school endured several ideologically and racially charged tenure battles. But recent years had been quiet until a series of bizarre incidents occurred last spring. It started with the summary of a Supreme Court case posted on HLCentral.com, which is a student-run Web site where law students share course outlines and study aides. On February 18th, a first-year student named Kiwi Camara—who happened to be seventeen years old—warned that he was using "offensive racial shorthand" and posted the following description of *Shelley v. Kraemer*, a famous 1948 Supreme Court decision banning racially restrictive covenants in real-estate contracts: "Nigs buy land w/ no nig covenant; Q: Enforceable?" On March 7th,

a black student, F. Michelle Simpson, complained to the Web administrator of HLCentral about Camara's use of "nigs." "If a person feels a certain way towards a group, and the 1st amendment gives him the right to express those views, please don't allow your helpful public study tool to be used by that person to degrade that group," she wrote. In response to the complaint, Camara removed his outlines from HLCentral.

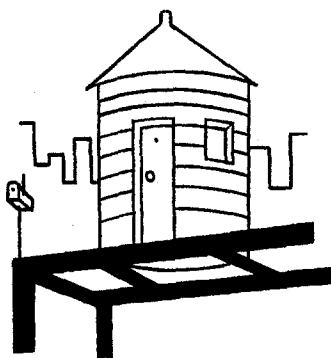
On April 1st, however, Simpson received an e-mail from someone who called himself gcrocodile. "I am deeply saddened that as a result of your complaint Kiwi Camara has decided not to share his outlines with the HLS community in the future," the pseudonymous author wrote. "Shame on you! You have done a great disservice both to HLS and to the African-American community. If you, as a race, want to prove that you do not deserve to be called by that word, work hard and you will be recognized. If you just complain and ask others to do the job for you, it will have the opposite effect. To give you an example, as a result of your complaint I have actually begun using the 'nigger' word more often than before the incident." The next day, someone put a leaflet in section members' mailboxes which included the offending e-mail along with a swastika, the words "Fuck Jews," and the statement "I hope you rot in hell with your yamukas. I bet that you will respond to this leaflet because Jews, unlike blacks, are a politically and economically favored group at this university." The author of the leaflet, too, was a mystery.

In light of the anonymous message to Simpson and the leaflet, the professors in the section, including Randall Kennedy, the author of the recently published *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*, convened their students. (Sections are groups of about

eighty students who take most of their first-year classes together.) Kennedy declined to comment.

"There was an expression of revulsion at what was seen as abuse of a black student," recalled Charles Nesson, the torts professor for the section, who emerged as a central figure in the controversy. At sixty-three, Nesson has taught at the law school for more than three decades, specializing lately in Internet law, but he retains the gentle, slightly hazy demeanor of a grownup flower child. Earlier last year, he caused a stir by telling a reporter for the law-school paper that he sometimes smoked marijuana before class. Describing the section's reaction to the gcrocodile e-mail, Nesson continued, "I was upset that they were clearly talking about somebody in the room. Gcrocodile was clearly sitting there in the room and being vilified in such strong terms . . . I actually made a statement urging whoever the author of this was to come forward to me."

For the moment, the identity of gcrocodile remained unknown. Meanwhile, there was another curious occurrence in a different first-year torts class. David Rosenberg taught the same subject as Charles Nesson, but the similarities between the two men end there. Rosenberg is a sixty-year-old loner who prowls the halls of the law school grimacing at what he regards as the decline of standards and the rise of the fashionable left. He nurses a special loathing for Critical Legal Studies, a once popular school of thought among radical professors who believe that the law is a vast system of oppression. One day in March, Rosenberg was conducting a class discussion about the theories of John Rawls, whose 1971 work, *A Theory of Justice*, is a touchstone of liberal political thought, when a student mentioned that feminists had critiqued Rawls's theories. As Tel Cary-Sadler, an African-American member of the class, recalled, "Rosenberg said, 'Feminists haven't put forth any positive theory of law, they just tear down other people's theories. Marxists put forth nothing, either. Feminists, Marxists, and the blacks have contributed nothing to torts.'" Cary-Sadler raised his hand and said he was offended by the notion that blacks had contributed nothing to tort law. "Good," Cary-Sadler said Rosenberg replied.

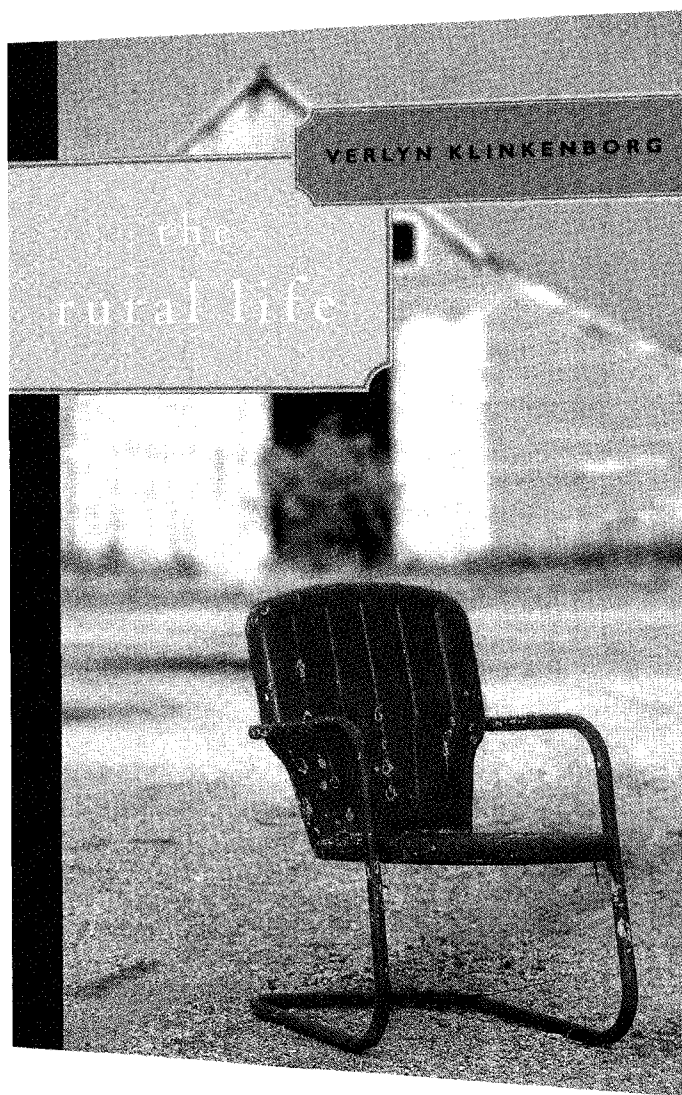


"He regarded offending students to be a pedagogical technique." Rosenberg later explained that he hadn't meant to disparage all black people, merely those associated with Critical Race Theory, a subset of Critical Legal Studies. In class the following day, Cary-Sadler read a statement about the remark, and Rosenberg again replied that he was attacking a group of theoreticians, not a race. The law-school community, he wrote in a statement about the controversy, "should realize that for a faculty member to be strongly criticized—and even threatened with formal sanctions—for making critical remarks about a genre of scholarship in class strikes at the very heart of academic freedom."

As the Rosenberg controversy simmered, a group of technologically adept students unmasked gcrocodile as Matthias Scholl, a Polish-born member of the first-year class, who then came forward and admitted his authorship to Nesson. (The creator of the swastika-bearing leaflet remains unknown.) On April 4th, Nesson and Scholl surprised Nesson's colleague Bernard Harcourt by showing up at Harcourt's criminal-law class. There the student apologized to Simpson and the class for his anonymous e-mail. "Matthias was chagrined," Nesson recalled. "He was eager to have himself understood. I believe Polish is his first language." (Scholl and Camara refused to talk about the incident.) Nesson then proposed to the class that they use the gcrocodile episode as the basis for a mock trial of Scholl, with Nesson as defense attorney and Harcourt as prosecutor. "This is a made-for-education kind of confrontation for a law school," Nesson said. "This could be a learning experience that would avoid the necessity for an administrative tribunal and official discipline on the record, which seemed somehow out of keeping with the air of community."

This was where things took an especially unsettling turn. A friend of Simpson's, who had also received an e-mail from Scholl, burst into tears and ran from the room. "To have her torts professor take a position which in her mind was opposed to her was more than she could handle at that time," Nesson told me. Suddenly, in return for proposing the mock trial of the unmasked gcrocodile, Nesson became the principal villain

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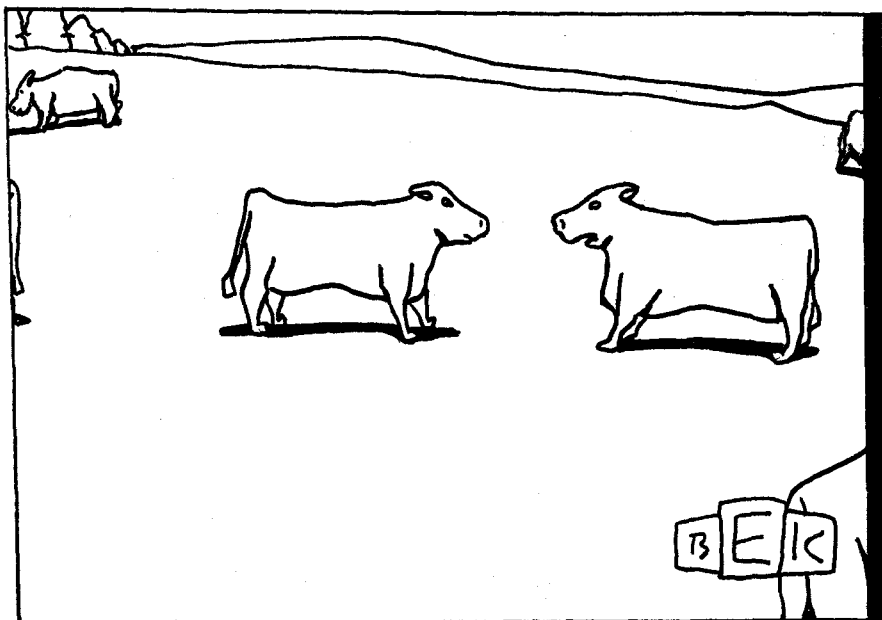
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"I suppose if I'm really honest with myself I'm not totally fine with being slaughtered."

in the drama, widely denounced for his purported racial insensitivity. Black students mobilized against both Rosenberg and Nesson. "People were really upset about not just these incidents but black students feeling marginalized, disenfranchised, and not really feeling represented by the administration," said Lacey Schwartz, a leader of the Black Law Students Association (B.L.S.A.). "It's a sick university, and it really needs help." Three hundred and fifty students staged a silent protest, followed by speeches from professors Charles Ogletree of the law school and Cornel West, who was still at the Afro-American Studies department.

But what, after all, had the professors done wrong? Rosenberg had disparaged, inarticulately at first, a school of legal thought; Nesson had tried, ineptly at best, to turn an unpleasant incident into a classroom exercise. Both men compounded the controversy in ways that fit their reputations as campus eccentrics. Characteristically, Rosenberg declined to offer any kind of apology. Just as typically, Nesson prostrated himself in remorse. When black students walked out of his class, Nesson abjectly e-mailed the B.L.S.A.: "I particularly appreciate your consideration in giving me advance notice before class yesterday of your walk-out demonstration from my class."

The responsibility for responding to the protests fell to Todd Rakoff, the dean in charge of the three-year law program. "Things got very confused very fast," Rakoff told me. "The question about the mock trial had become so riled up that it was hard to get back to torts." So Nesson agreed that Rakoff and another professor would give the remainder of his torts classes for the semester. As for Rosenberg, Rakoff said, "The students were also upset because maybe there were viewpoints about torts that they weren't getting in the class because he seemed to have such a strong viewpoint of his own. So, with his participation, they got a couple of guest speakers to give alternative views. They also asked if they could tape his class instead of attending in person, because some people really felt alienated or they didn't consider David's explanation sufficient." In other words, as a result of the two professors' purported misdeeds, their students no longer had to show up and listen to them.

These victories over Nesson and Rosenberg did not satisfy the B.L.S.A., which demanded that the law school move to create an office of multicultural affairs, "dedicated to dealing with issues of racial harassment and providing diversity training"; to "prevent Professors Nesson and Rosenberg from teaching first-year

classes and publicly reprimand them in the *Harvard Law Bulletin* and *Harvard Crimson*"; to require professors, deans, and incoming students to attend training in tolerance and diversity; and to "institute a policy, applying to both students and professors, banning racial harassment analogous to the School's sexual harassment policy." By and large, the administration responded favorably. Within days of the protests, the school put up posters around campus saying, "Some appalling things have happened at Harvard Law School recently. . . . We emphatically condemn these acts." Scholl was disciplined for his anonymous e-mail. The law school brought in a consultant to talk to students about racial issues in a series of meetings called "Difficult Conversations"; it organized a series of faculty workshops designed to teach about race; and a consultant conducted focus groups to learn the concerns of minority students. As for a possible racial-harassment code, the dean appointed a faculty, staff, and student Committee on Healthy Diversity, which began meeting this fall, to address the issue. "But now it's just called the Committee on Diversity," Rakoff said. "There were too many jokes."

What may be most striking about the imbroglio is that such quirky and anomalous events generated such a consensus at the law school—that racial bias was widespread and that immediate corrective action was needed. As Charles Ogletree put it, "We're stronger as a result of these experiences. No faculty has left, no one has been punished or banished. Our minority acceptances are at an all-time high." Still, the law school's comprehensive response may have given its students an unrealistic picture of the world beyond Cambridge.

"This was a hysterical, ridiculous overreaction to a couple of unfortunate incidents," Charles Fried told me. "This place is so politically correct that the notion that we are rife with racism is never-never land." According to Alan Dershowitz, "The real world that we are sending people out to is full of racism, sexism, and homophobia. It's not a place where our adult students should be running to Mommy and Daddy Dean and saying, 'Please protect us from racist speech.' You want diversity? Rosenberg and Nesson are diversity."

One lesson of both the law-school and the Paulin controversies may be the peril of making free-speech judgments at Internet speed. The most questionable decisions—the cancellation of Paulin's lecture, and the abandonment of Nesson and Rosenberg—happened the fastest. Just a few days' deliberation prompted the English Department to reiterate its invitation to Paulin. Learning from the English Department's woes, Harvard's Department of Afro-American Studies has vowed to proceed with a reading this spring by the New Jersey poet laureate Amiri Baraka (né LeRoi Jones), who wrote a poem that appeared to posit the conspiratorial notion that the Israelis had advance notice of the attack on the World Trade Center. (The invitation to Baraka preceded his poem by many months.) At the law school, the B.L.S.A. has continued its protest, but the diversity committee, under the leadership of Martha Field, a faculty moderate, has set a cautious course this fall. "We've done some surveys and collected material from a lot of places, and real speech codes punishing people seem to have had problems," Field told me. For his part, Lawrence Summers also seems dubious about the value of speech codes. "I think it's almost impossible to legislate civility, just like it's almost impossible to legislate honesty," he said. "There are a set of virtues that are very important for communities and that are very important for universities to uphold that are not amenable to legislation and sanction as a means for their upholding."

In late November, a group of faculty members held a forum on controversial speech and the power of literary expression, because, as Professor Elisa New wrote in the invitation, "events of the past week make clear, at the very least, that literature does matter—that it moves people and that it exerts force in the world." About fifty English majors at the college came to hear professors read and discuss selections from such works as "Lolita" and "The Merchant of Venice." Robert Kiely, the former department chairman, read a verse that addressed some of the same passions that had brought Harvard to this unlikely crossroads. Like Paulin's poem, the work Kiely read addressed the conflict in the Middle East, and it concluded, "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." It was Psalm 137. ♦



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SADDAM'S SURPRISINGLY SENTIMENTAL LAST WILL

BY BRUCE MCCALL

Being of sound mind and body and in a big hurry, I hereby leave everything to the Élite Republican Guard Athletic League, but could somebody also start acting on the following sentimental odds and ends the minute my demise is announced by loudspeaker from the Palace of Information?

Codicil No. 1:

The coffee can buried in the backyard of Palace 43, five steps to the southeast of the barbecue patio, contains a key. It is, of course, for my roller skates and not for a Swiss bank account or something, and it is my wish that it go to my old roller-skating coach, the man in the sunglasses waiting in the black Mercedes S600 parked in my spot.

Codicil No. 2:

Everybody knows how much I've always loved ceremony. That is why I will lie on my deathbed hoping that, as a little "sendoff," the fireworks in the silo under Palace 12 be ignited the moment U.S. troops enter Baghdad. (They're the very tall pointy-tipped fireworks labelled "ICBM," I think it is, in Korean.) Ignition is by the pair of matching red keys found under the front doormat of Palace 13.

Codicil No. 3:

To my ever-loyal Chief of Personal Security, easily identified by the blowtorch scar on his face and by the AK-47 he carries, even in the tub, I leave my personal date-minder, marked "ESCAPE PLAN NO. 327," which is in the top left-hand drawer of my desk at the Palace of the Revolution.

Codicil No. 4:

Can I make a silly-sounding last request? In the event that the Saddam

Hussein Brigade of the Presidential Household Guard fails to follow my order to blow up all my palaces, each Brigade member should be handed one of the special vials marked "Vitamin C Supplement—Bite Down Hard" (these can be found in the secret compartment behind the bidet in my private bathroom in Palace 31) and be observed using it, just for fun.

Codicil No. 5:

It is a fond wish of mine that the American Express Platinum Cards held by my relatives, especially my in-laws, be cancelled immediately.

Codicil No. 6:

In my private bedchamber at Palace 59, there is a gold credenza holding a limited-edition Saddam Hussein bobble-head doll. If you turn the doll's head counterclockwise, it will come off, revealing a silver key inside. It is for my woodworking shop and certainly not for a safe-deposit box in the Bahamas or someplace. It is one of my nuttier dying wishes that this key be delivered A.S.A.P. to the one-armed man in the back of the dry-cleaning shop at 420 Avenue of the Hapless Martyrs, Baghdad.

Codicil No. 7:

As a reminder of how much I've always loved airplanes, it is my farewell-to-this-life plea that the Gulfstream IV now parked at Saddam Hussein World Airport, outside Baghdad, be fuelled, started up, and left indefinitely with engines running and stair ramp down. There is no need to file a flight plan.

Codicil No. 8:

It is my parting request that all seven official Saddam Hussein body doubles

dress up in my fanciest parade uniforms and surrender to U.S. troops the moment they enter Baghdad, not to bamboozle the Great Satan into thinking he has nabbed the real Saddam while I make my getaway but because it's the right thing to do.

Codicil No. 9:

It is my long-standing desire, and certainly not part of some diabolical escape ploy, that my valuable private collection of false Iranian, Panamanian, Paraguayan, and Syrian passports, which are stored in the glove compartment of the maroon Cadillac Escalade S.U.V. with the vanity plate SADDAMWHAM! in the Saddam Hussein Garage at Palace 29, be immediately FedExed to the address written on the scrap of paper stuck between pages 201 and 202 of the paperback edition of "Hollywood Wives" in the private library of my office suite at the Hall of the Heroes, Baghdad, and that the scrap of paper then be instantly burned.

Codicil No. 10:

It is my fond wish as I take leave of this life forever that the two-ton iron cannister marked "BUG SPRAY, DO NOT BREATHE," found in the back of the gardening shed at Palace 38, be rolled out of hiding and taken to any really high rooftop in Baghdad, from which its contents can be sprayed all over the city at the first sign of U.S. troops.

Codicil No. 11:

Finally, it is my nostalgic last request that all of those mural-size Saddam Hussein oil portraits, gigantic Saddam Hussein statues, Saddam Hussein busts, Saddam Hussein billboards, Saddam Hussein souvenir throw pillows, bottle openers, lapel pins, lucky key chains, etc., etc., be collected and placed in secret storage, under armed guard, in the name of Colonel X, until such time as Colonel X appears to reclaim it all. (He will probably be accompanied by a mechanized unit wildly firing AK-47s, and will thus be easy to identify.) ♦

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THE COLD TEST

What the Administration knew about Pakistan and the North Korean nuclear program.

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

Last June, four months before the current crisis over North Korea became public, the Central Intelligence Agency delivered a comprehensive analysis of North Korea's nuclear ambitions to President Bush and his top advisers. The document, known as a National Intelligence Estimate, was classified as Top Secret S.C.I. (for "sensitive compartmented information"), and its distribution within the government was tightly restricted. The C.I.A. report made the case that North Korea had been violating international law—and agreements with South Korea and the United States—by secretly obtaining the means to produce weapons-grade uranium.

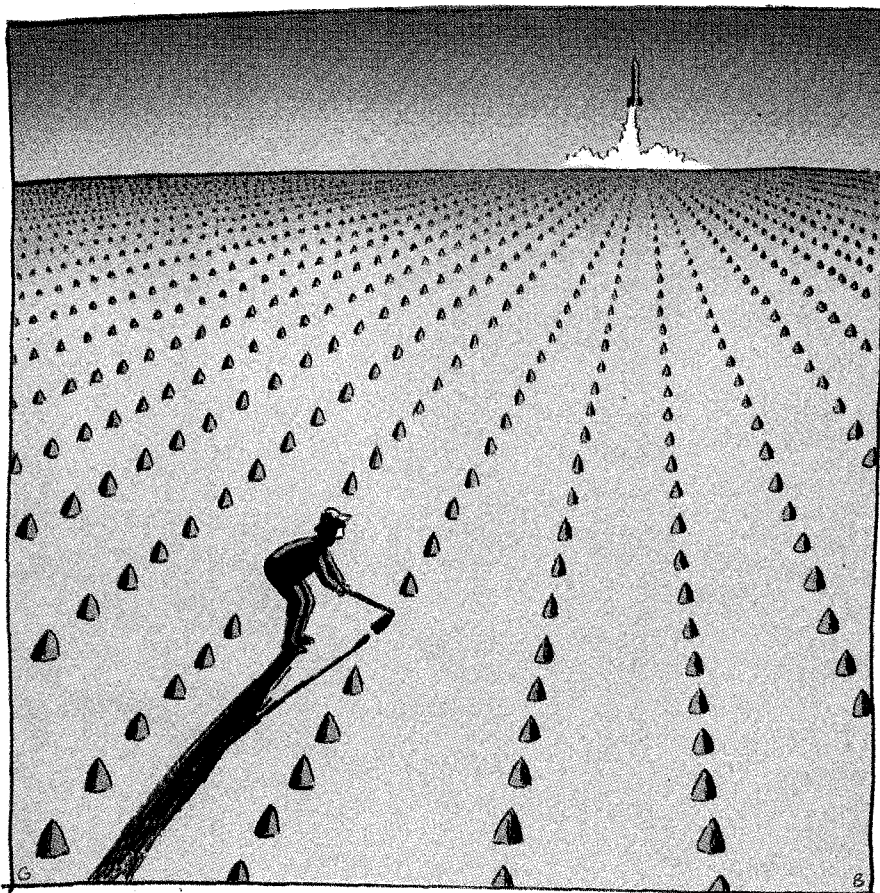
The document's most politically sensitive information, however, was about Pakistan. Since 1997, the C.I.A. said, Pakistan had been sharing sophisticated technology, warhead-design information, and weapons-testing data with the Pyongyang regime. Pakistan, one of the Bush Administration's important allies in the war against terrorism, was helping North Korea build the bomb.

In 1985, North Korea signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which led to the opening of most of its nuclear sites to international inspection. By the early nineteen-nineties, it became evident to American intelligence agencies and international inspectors that the North Koreans were reprocessing more spent fuel than they had declared, and might have separated enough plutonium, a reactor by-product, to fabricate one or two nuclear weapons. The resulting diplomatic crisis was resolved when North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Il, entered into an agreement with the Clinton Administration to stop the nuclear-weapons program in return for economic aid and the construction of two light-water nuclear reactors that, under safeguards, would generate electricity.

Within three years, however, North

Korea had begun using a second method to acquire fissile material. This time, instead of using spent fuel, scientists were trying to produce weapons-grade uranium from natural uranium—with Pakistani technology. One American intelligence official, referring to the C.I.A. report, told me, "It points a clear finger at the Pakistanis. The technical stuff

come is arms sales, and its most sought-after products are missiles. And one of its customers has been Pakistan, which has a nuclear arsenal of its own but needs the missiles to more effectively deliver the warheads to the interior of its rival, India. In 1997, according to the C.I.A. report, Pakistan began paying for missile systems from North Korea in part by sharing its nuclear-weapons secrets. According to the report, Pakistan sent prototypes of high-speed centrifuge machines to North Korea. And sometime in 2001 North Korean scientists began to enrich uranium in significant quantities. Pakistan also provided data on how to build and test a uranium-triggered nuclear weapon, the C.I.A. report said.



Let's make a deal: Pakistan needed missiles. North Korea needed warheads.

is crystal clear—not hedged and not ambivalent." Referring to North Korea's plutonium project in the early nineteen-nineties, he said, "Before, they were sneaking." Now "it's off the wall. We know they can do a lot more and a lot more quickly."

North Korea is economically isolated; one of its main sources of export in-

It had taken Pakistan a decade of experimentation, and a substantial financial investment, before it was able to produce reliable centrifuges; with Pakistan's help, the North Koreans had "chopped many years off" the development process, the intelligence official noted. It is not known how many centrifuges are now being operated in

GUY BILLOUT

North Korea or where the facilities are. (They are assumed to be in underground caves.) The Pakistani centrifuges, the official said, are slim cylinders, roughly six feet in height, that could be shipped "by the hundreds" in cargo planes. But, he added, "all Pakistan would have to do is give the North Koreans the blueprints. They are very sophisticated in their engineering." And with a few thousand centrifuges, he said, "North Korea could have enough fissile material to manufacture two or three warheads a year, with something left over to sell."

A former senior Pakistani official told me that his government's contacts with North Korea increased dramatically in 1997; the Pakistani economy had foundered, and there was "no more money" to pay for North Korean missile support, so the Pakistani government began paying for missiles by providing "some of the know-how and the specifics." Pakistan helped North Korea conduct a series of "cold tests," simulated nuclear explosions, using natural uranium, which are necessary to determine whether a nuclear device will detonate properly. Pakistan also gave the North Korean intelligence service advice on "how to fly under the radar," as the former official put it—that is, how to hide nuclear research from American satellites and U.S. and South Korean intelligence agents.

Whether North Korea had actually begun to build warheads was not known at the time of the 1994 crisis and is still not known today, according to the C.I.A. report. The report, those who have read it say, included separate and contradictory estimates from the C.I.A., the Pentagon, the State Department, and the Department of Energy regarding the number of warheads that North Korea might have been capable of making, and provided no consensus on whether or not the Pyongyang regime is actually producing them.

Over the years, there have been sporadic reports of North Korea's contacts with Pakistan, most of them concerning missile sales. Much less has been known about nuclear ties. In the past decade, American intelligence tracked at least thirteen visits to North Korea made by A. Q. Khan, who was then the director of a Pakistani weapons-research laboratory, and who is known as the father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb. This Octo-

ber, after news of the uranium program came out, the *Times* ran a story suggesting that Pakistan was a possible supplier of centrifuges to North Korea. General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's leader, attacked the account as "absolutely baseless," and added, "There is no such thing as collaboration with North Korea in the nuclear area." The White House appeared to take the Musharraf statement at face value. In November, Secretary of State Colin Powell told reporters he had been assured by Musharraf that Pakistan was not currently engaging in any nuclear transactions with North Korea. "I have made clear to him that any . . . contact between Pakistan and North Korea we believe would be improper, inappropriate, and would have consequences," Powell said. "President Musharraf understands the seriousness of the issue." After that, Pakistan quickly faded from press coverage of the North Korea story.

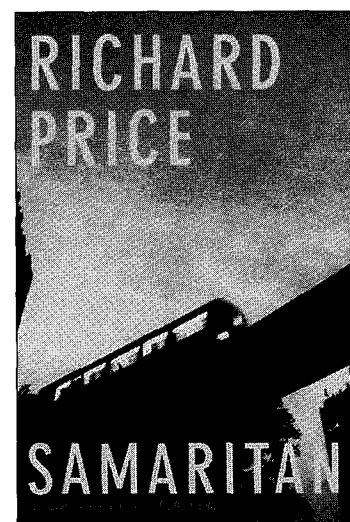
The Bush Administration may have few good options with regard to Pakistan, given the country's role in the war on terror. Within two weeks of September 11th, Bush lifted the sanctions that had been imposed on Pakistan because of its nuclear-weapons activities. In the view of American disarmament experts, the sanctions had in any case failed to deal with one troubling issue: the close ties between some scientists working for the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and radical Islamic groups. "There is an awful lot of Al Qaeda sympathy within Pakistan's nuclear program," an intelligence official told me. One American nonproliferation expert said, "Right now, the most dangerous country in the world is Pakistan. If we're incinerated next week, it'll be because of H.E.U."—highly enriched uranium—"that was given to Al Qaeda by Pakistan."

Pakistan's relative poverty could pose additional risks. In early January, a Web-based Pakistani-exile newspaper opposed to the Musharraf government reported that, in the past six years, nine nuclear scientists had emigrated from Pakistan—apparently in search of better pay—and could not be located.

An American intelligence official I spoke with called Pakistan's behavior the "worst nightmare" of the international arms-control community: a Third World country becoming an instrument of proliferation. "The West's primary control of nuclear proliferation was based

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AUTUMN PASSAGE

On suffering, which is real.
On the mouth that never closes,
the air that dries the mouth.

On the miraculous dying body,
its greens and purples.
On the beauty of hair itself.

On the dazzling toddler:
"Like eggplant," he says
when you say "Vegetable,"

"Chrysanthemum" to "Flower."
On his grandmother's suffering, larger
than vanished skyscrapers,

September zucchini,
other things too big. For her glory
that goes along with it,

glory of grown children's vigil,
communal fealty, glory
of the body, which operates

even as it falls apart, the body
that can no longer even make fever
but nonetheless burns

florid and bright and magnificent
as it dims, as it shrinks,
as it turns to something else.

—Elizabeth Alexander

on technology denial and diplomacy," the official said. "Our fear was, first, that a Third World country would develop nuclear weapons indigenously; and, second, that it would then provide the technology to other countries. This is profound. It changes the world." Pakistan's nuclear program flourished in the nineteen-eighties, at a time when its military and intelligence forces were working closely with the United States to repel the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The official said, "The transfer of enrichment technology by Pakistan is a direct outgrowth of the failure of the United States to deal with the Pakistani program when we could have done so. We've lost control."

The C.I.A. report remained unpublished throughout the summer and early fall, as the Administration concentrated on laying the groundwork for a

war with Iraq. Many officials in the Administration's own arms-control offices were unaware of the report. "It was held very tightly," an official told me. "Compartmentalization is used to protect sensitive sources who can get killed if their information is made known, but it's also used for controlling sensitive information for political reasons."

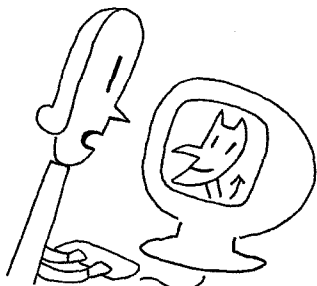
One American nonproliferation expert said that, given the findings in the June report, he was dismayed that the Administration had not made the information available. "It's important to convey to the American people that the North Korean situation presented us with an enormous military and political crisis," he said. "This goes to the heart of North Asian security, to the future of Japan and South Korea, and to the future of the broader issue of nonproliferation."

A Japanese diplomat who has been

closely involved in Korean affairs defended the Bush Administration's delay in publicly dealing with the crisis. Referring to the report, he said, "If the intelligence assessment was correct, you have to think of the implications. Disclosure of information is not always instant. You need some time to assess the content." He added, "To have a dialogue, you really have to find the right time and the right conditions. So far, President Bush has done the right thing, from our perspective." (The White House and the C.I.A. did not respond to requests for comment.)

President Bush's contempt for the North Korean government is well known, and makes the White House's failure to publicize the C.I.A. report or act on it all the more puzzling. In his State of the Union address in January of last year, Bush cited North Korea, along with Iraq and Iran, as part of the "axis of evil." Bob Woodward, in "Bush at War," his book about the Administration's response to September 11th, recalls an interview at the President's Texas ranch in August: "I loathe Kim Jong Il!" Bush shouted, waving his finger in the air. "I've got a visceral reaction to this guy, because he is starving his people." Woodward wrote that the President had become so emotional while speaking about Kim Jong Il that "I thought he might jump."

The Bush Administration was put on notice about North Korea even before it received the C.I.A. report. In January of last year, John Bolton, the Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control, declared that North Korea had a covert nuclear-weapons program and was in violation of the nonproliferation treaty. In February, the President was urged by three members of Congress to withhold support for the two reactors promised to North Korea, on the ground that the Pyongyang government was said to be operating a secret processing site "for the enrichment of uranium." In May, Bolton



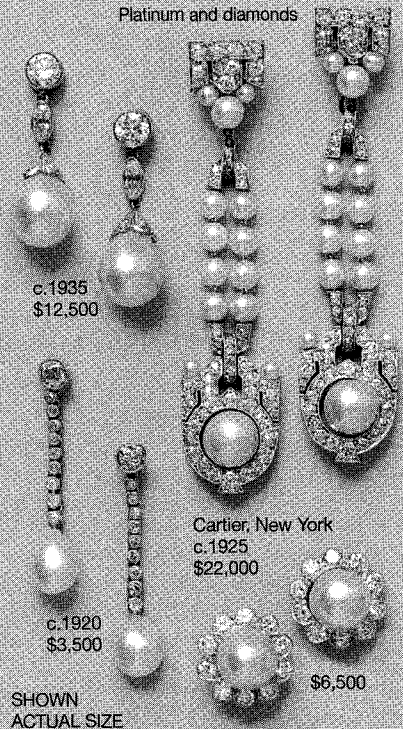
again accused North Korea of failing to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the group responsible for monitoring treaty compliance. Nevertheless, on July 5th the President's national-security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, who presumably had received the C.I.A. report weeks earlier, made it clear in a letter to the congressmen that the Bush Administration would continue providing North Korea with shipments of heavy fuel oil and nuclear technology for the two promised energy-generating reactors.

The Administration's fitful North Korea policy, with its mixture of anger and seeming complacency, is in many ways a consequence of its unrelenting focus on Iraq. Late last year, the White House released a national-security-strategy paper authorizing the military "to detect and destroy an adversary's WMD assets"—weapons of mass destruction—"before these weapons are used." The document argued that the armed forces "must have the capability to defend against WMD-armed adversaries . . . because deterrence may not succeed." Logically, the new strategy should have applied first to North Korea, whose nuclear-weapons program remains far more advanced than Iraq's. The Administration's goal, however, was to mobilize public opinion for an invasion of Iraq. One American intelligence official told me, "The Bush doctrine says MAD"—mutual assured destruction—"will not work for these rogue nations, and therefore we have to preempt if negotiations don't work. And the Bush people knew that the North Koreans had already reinvigorated their programs and were more dangerous than Iraq. But they didn't tell anyone. They have bankrupted their own policy—thus far—by not doing what their doctrine calls for."

Iraq's military capacity has been vitiated by its defeat in the Gulf War and years of inspections, but North Korea is one of the most militarized nations in the world, with more than forty per cent of its population under arms. Its artillery is especially fearsome: more than ten thousand guns, along with twenty-five hundred rocket launchers capable of launching five hundred thousand shells an hour, are positioned within range of Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The Pentagon has estimated that all-out war would result in

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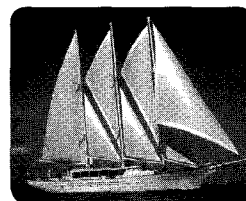
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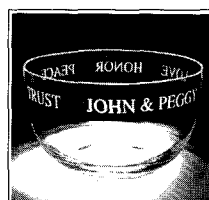


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more than a million military and civilian casualties, including as many as a hundred thousand Americans killed. A Clinton Administration official recalled attending a congressional briefing in the mid-nineties at which Army General Gary Luck, the commander of U.S. forces in Korea, laconically said, "Senator, I could win this one for you—but not right away."

In early October, James A. Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, flew to Pyongyang with a large entourage for a showdown over the uranium-enrichment program. The agenda was, inevitably, shaped by officials' awareness of the President's strong personal views. "There was a huge fight over whether to give the North Koreans an ultimatum or to negotiate," one American expert on Korea told me. "Which is the same fight they're having now." Kelly was authorized to tell the Koreans that the U.S. had learned about the illicit uranium program, but his careful instructions left him no room to negotiate. His scripted message was blunt: North Korea must stop the program before any negotiations could take place. "This is a sad tale of bureaucracy," another American expert said. "The script Kelly had was written in the N.S.C."—the National Security Council—"by hard-liners. I don't think the President wanted a crisis at this time." The C.I.A. report had predicted that North Korea, if confronted with the evidence, would not risk an open break with the 1994 agreement and would do nothing to violate the nonproliferation treaty. "It was dead wrong," an intelligence officer told me. "I hope there are other people in the agency who understand the North Koreans better than the people who wrote this."

"The Koreans were stunned," a Japanese diplomat who spoke to some of the participants told me. "They didn't know that the U.S. knew what it knew." After an all-night caucus in Pyongyang, Kang Suk Ju, the First Vice Foreign Minister of North Korea, seemed to confirm the charge when he responded by insisting upon his nation's right to develop nuclear weapons. What he didn't talk about was whether it actually had any. Kang Suk Ju also accused the United States, the Japanese diplomat said, of "threatening North Korea's survival." Kang then produced a list of the United States' al-

leged failures to meet its own obligations under the 1994 agreement, and offered to shut down the enrichment program in return for an American promise not to attack and a commitment to normalize relations. Kelly, constrained by his instructions, could only re-state his brief: the North Koreans must act first. The impasse was on.

But, as with the June C.I.A. report, the Administration kept quiet about the Pyongyang admission. It did not inform the public until October 16th, five days after Congress voted to authorize military force against Iraq. Even then, according to Administration sources quoted in the *Washington Post*, the Administration went public only after learning that the North Korean admission—with obvious implications for the debate on Iraq—was being leaked to the press. On the CBS program "Face the Nation" on October 20th, Condoleezza Rice denied that news of the Kelly meeting had been deliberately withheld until after the vote. President Bush, she said, simply hadn't been presented with options until October 15th. "What was surprising to us was not that there was a program," Rice said. "What was surprising to us was that the North Koreans admitted there was a program."

"Did we *want* them to deny it?" a former American intelligence expert on North Korea asked me afterward. He said, "I could never understand what was going on with the North Korea policy." Referring to relations between the intelligence service and the Bush Administration, he said, "We couldn't get people's attention, and, even if we could, they never had a sensible approach. The Administration was deeply, viciously ideological." It was contemptuous not only of the Pyongyang government but of earlier efforts by the Clinton White House to address the problem of nuclear proliferation—a problem that could only get worse if Washington ignored it. The former intelligence official told me, "When it came time to confront North Korea, we had no plan, no contact—nothing to negotiate with. You have to be in constant diplomatic contact, so you can engage and be in the strongest position to solve the problem. But we let it all fall apart."

The former intelligence official added, referring to the confrontation in North Korea in October, "The Kelly meeting and

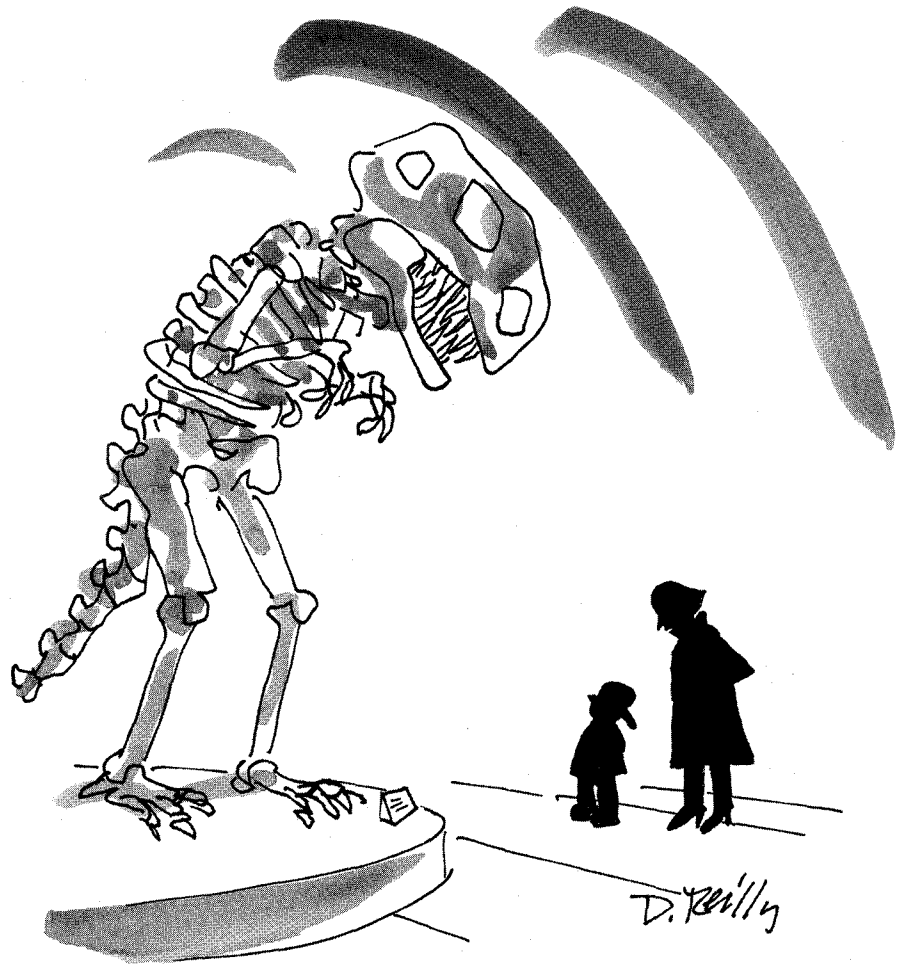
the subsequent American statement have tipped the balance in Pyongyang. The North Koreans were already terrifically suspicious of the United States. They saw the Kelly message as 'When you fix this, get back to us.' They were very angry. That, plus the fact that they feel they are next in line after Iraq, made them believe they had to act very quickly to protect themselves."

The result was that in October, as in June, the Administration had no option except to deny that there was a crisis. When the first published reports of the Kelly meeting appeared, a White House spokesman said that the President found it to be "troubling, sobering news." Rice repeatedly emphasized that North Korea and Iraq were separate cases. "Saddam Hussein is in a category by himself," Rice said on ABC's "Nightline." One arms-control official told me, "The White House didn't want to deal with a second crisis."

In the following months, the American policy alternated between tough talk in public—vows that the Administration wouldn't be "blackmailed," or even meet with North Korean leaders—and private efforts, through third parties, to open an indirect line of communication with Pyongyang. North Korea, meanwhile, expelled international inspectors, renounced the nonproliferation treaty, and threatened to once again begin reprocessing spent nuclear fuel—all the while insisting on direct talks with the Bush Administration.

One Clinton Administration official who was involved in the 1994 talks with Kim Jong Il acknowledged that he felt deeply disappointed by the North Korean actions. "The deal was that we'd give them two reactors and they, in turn, have to knock off this shit," he said. "They've got something going, and it's in violation of the deal." Nonetheless, the official said, the Bush Administration "has got to talk to Kim Jong Il." Despite the breakdown of the 1994 agreement, and despite the evidence of cheating, the C.I.A. report depicted the agreement as a success insofar as over the past eight years it had prevented North Korea from building warheads—as many as a hundred, according to some estimates.

Last week, President Bush gave in to what many of his advisers saw as the inevitable and agreed to consider renewed American aid in return for



"They got extinct because they didn't listen to their mommies."

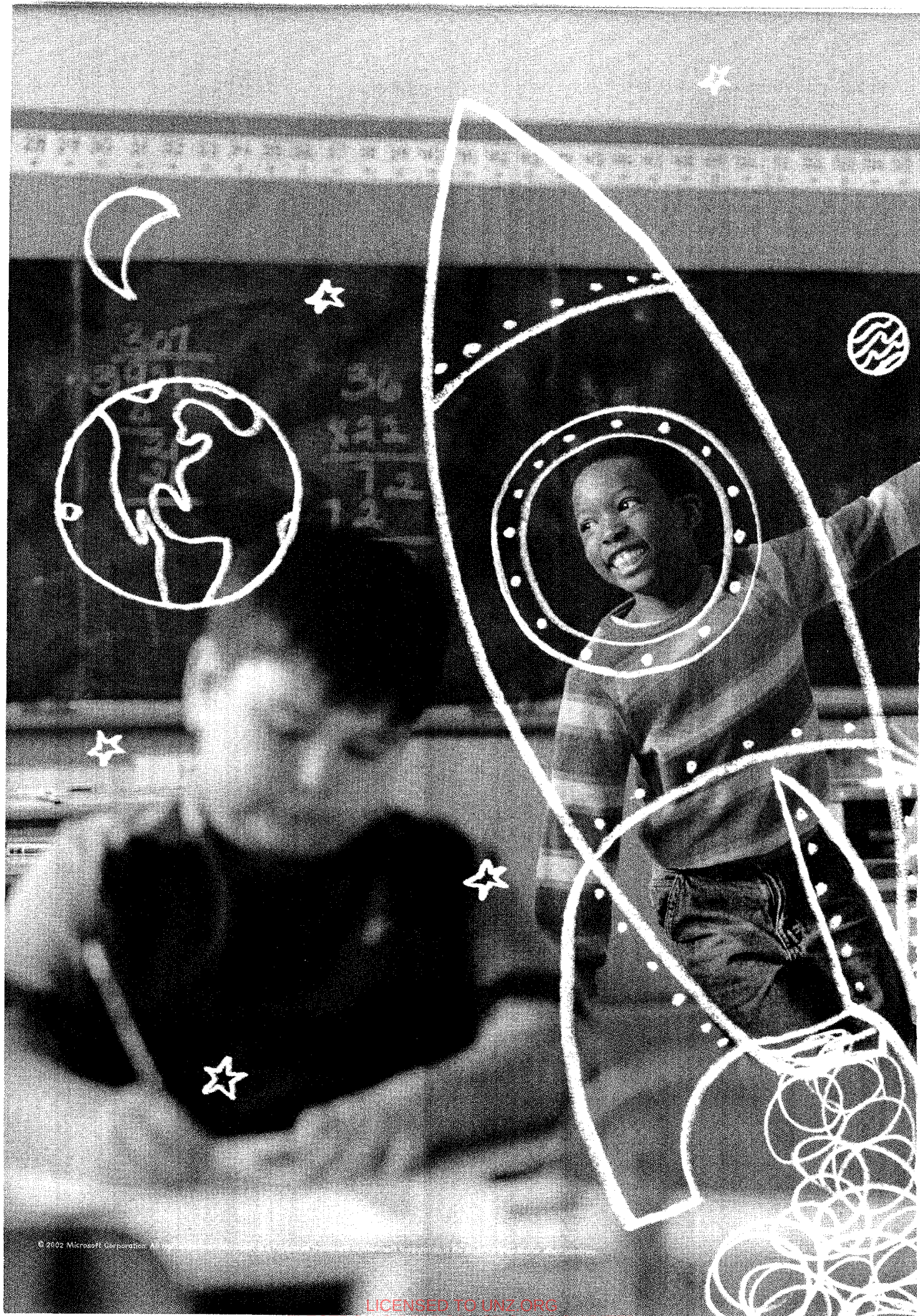
a commitment by North Korea to abandon its nuclear program. However, the White House was still resisting direct negotiations with the Kim Jong Il government.

In a speech in June, Robert Gallucci, a diplomat who was put in charge of negotiating the 1994 agreement with Pyongyang, and who is now dean of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, recalled that Bush's first approach to North Korea had been to make it "a poster child" for the Administration's arguments for a missile-defense system. "This was the cutting edge of the threat against which we were planning and shaping our defense," he said. "There was a belief that North Korea was not to be dealt with by negotiation."

"But then September 11th happened, and September 11th meant that national missile defense could not defend America, because the threat was going to come not from missiles but from a hundred

other ways as well," he said. "And so we've come full circle. . . . North Korea and other rogue states who threaten us with weapons of mass destruction threaten not only because they themselves might not be deterrable but because they may transfer this capability to those who can't be deterred or defended against."

One American intelligence official who has attended recent White House meetings cautioned against relying on the day-to-day Administration statements that emphasize a quick settlement of the dispute. The public talk of compromise is being matched by much private talk of high-level vindication. "Bush and Cheney want that guy's head"—Kim Jong Il's—"on a platter. Don't be distracted by all this talk about negotiations. There will be negotiations, but they have a plan, and they are going to get this guy after Iraq. He's their version of Hitler." ♦



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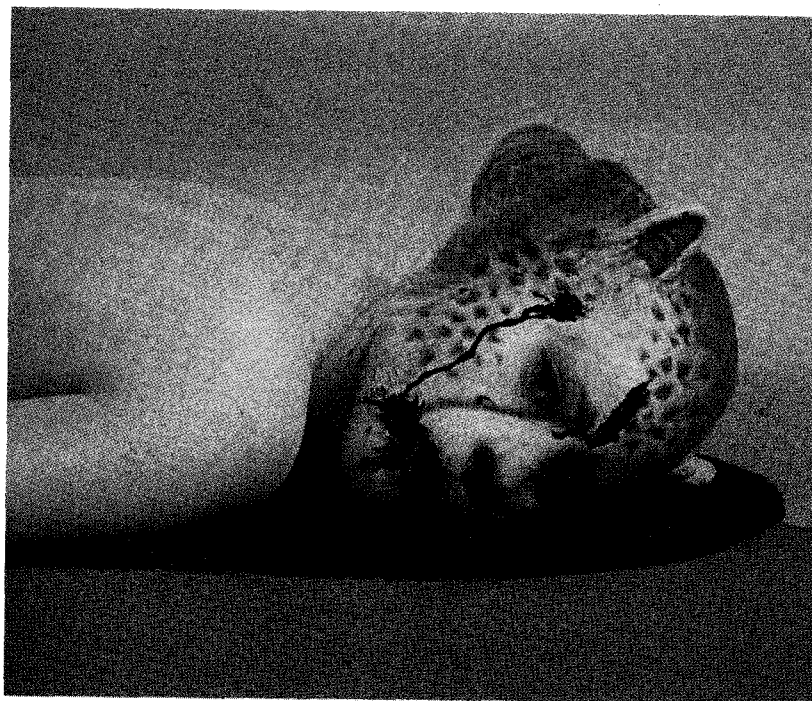
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HIS BODY, HIMSELF

Matthew Barney's strange and passionate exploration of gender.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

In today's somewhat somnolent art world, an artist who brings what Victor Hugo once described as a "new shudder" runs the risk of immediate and unthinking acclaim. Matthew Barney encountered this at his New York debut, in 1991, when crowds packed the Barbara Gladstone gallery to watch a video of the artist, naked, scaling the gallery's walls and ceiling with the aid of a rock climber's harness and titanium ice screws, and a sort of critical euphoria has attended his career ever since. Instant recognition, however, seems to have left this young man's very real talent unscathed. At the age of thirty-five, he is about to have a vast, multimedia exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum (opening February 21st) called "The Cremaster Cycle," focussing on the last eight years of his work in film, video, sculpture, drawing, photography, and music. A full-fledged apotheosis is at hand, although, in truth, what Barney has brought us is still something of a puzzle.

If you ask him, he will tell you that

his work is sculpture. The five films in the "Cremaster" cycle are vehicles for the sculptures he makes for them, he has said, and the strange, nonverbal, and sometimes impenetrable stories that each film tells are also sculptures—narrative sculptures, or maybe sculptural narratives. To most of his admirers, however, Barney is primarily a filmmaker. The five "Cremaster"s, shot on video, were transferred to film and shown in movie houses and museum auditoriums here and abroad, and Barney soon gained a following as a new kind of auteur, one who uses autobiographical material, landscape, biology, architecture, dramatic actions, private fantasies, classical myths, elaborate costumes, prosthetic devices, and transforming makeup to create worlds that are unlike any you'll see at the multiplex. In "Cremaster 3," for example, there is a horse-racing scene at the track in Saratoga Springs, where, as the camera moves closer, we become aware that the ten trotting horses in the race are flayed, their muscles, tendons, and viscera rotting

away from their fast-moving bodies. Another sequence in the same film shows Barney (who appears prominently in four of the five films), wearing a voluminous kilt and a huge, Shocking-pink shako, climbing the interior walls of the Guggenheim Museum, using handholds to hoist himself from tier to tier, and encountering bizarre obstacles at each level: a Rockette-like chorus line of girls in lamb suits; a mosh pit between two violently duelling heavy-metal rock bands; a beautiful fashion model who turns into a fanged cheetah-woman; the sculptor Richard Serra (played by himself) flinging molten Vaseline against a parapet wall. Every scene connects in some way to the dreamlike structure of the "Cremaster" cycle; although the connections may not be clear to an untutored viewer, the cycle's hermetic aspects have not impeded its acceptance, by a significant segment of the international art and film worlds, as a major work of art.

One thing Barney has certainly done is draw attention to a word that was not in

everyday use. The cremaster, as any Barney fan now knows, is the muscle that raises or lowers the testicles, in response to changes in outside temperature or involuntary reflexes. Ascending and descending actions of one kind or another have figured in Barney's work since his undergraduate days at Yale, but in the "Cremaster" cycle it is not the muscle itself that really concerns us. It is, rather, the process of sexual differentiation that takes place within the womb. For the first eight weeks of pregnancy, a fetus exists in a state that is neither male nor female. During the ninth week—barring the sort of

complications described in Jeffrey Eugenides's "Middlesex"—the internal gonads begin to move either upward, to become ovaries, or downward, to become testicles. The underlying motif of the five films, whose combined running time is just short of seven hours, has to do with the organism's struggle to resist that fateful moment of sexual definition.

To those who might wonder how this struggle—undocumented so far in medical literature—could serve as the basis for a five-film epic, the answer is simply that it has. Barney's "Cremaster" films have been compared by more than one critic to

Richard Wagner's "Ring" cycle, as a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the multimedia age. It should be added that Barney does not take himself or his work that seriously. An extremely engaging young man whose clean-cut looks and quiet good manners tend to veil the intensity of his ambition, he occasionally bursts out laughing at the more ridiculous aspects of his epic. But this doesn't mean that he thinks it's a joke; irony, the postmodern calling card, has no place in Barney's thought process, or in the "Cremaster" cycle.

"There's nothing disguised about Matthew," Chelsea Romersa, the associate



LEFT: PETER STRIEMANN, CHRIS WINGET PP. 51, 54, 55 © 2002 MATTHEW BARNEY/COURTESY BARBARA GLADSTONE

Barney as the Entered Apprentice in "Cremaster 3." Opposite: Aimee Mullins as a cheetah-woman, one of her many roles in the film.

producer of the last three “Cremaster”s, says, but even she finds him something of an enigma. For someone who frequently uses his naked body as a material for art, Barney in person reveals very little. He resists talking about himself, and Romersa and the other members of the closely knit team that works on his projects guard his privacy as carefully as he does. None of them will say much, for example, about his current liaison with the Icelandic rock star Björk, except that Matthew, who had been totally submerged in his work for the last decade, seems happier now. Barney will talk about his work, when pressed, but the long and sometimes excruciating silences that punctuate these conversations (excruciating for the listener, not for Barney), while he thinks about what he wants to say, suggest how difficult such discussions are for him.

“In the impulse to make something,” he said to me last fall, “there’s an assumption that you can finish it, and that it can be a resolved thing. I think what the ‘Cremaster’ project is suggesting is that this is impossible.” Barney revels in unresolved endings, in unfinished stories that turn back on themselves to offer alternative or competing visions. In “Cremaster 5,” which takes the form of a nineteenth-century opera, the Queen of Chain (Ursula

Andress, coaxed out of semi-retirement by Barney for the role) is in love with her court magician (Barney), who also seems to be Harry Houdini. At one point, the magician throws himself, naked and manacled, from a parapet of the Lanchid Bridge, over the Danube, in Budapest. The Queen believes that he has leaped to his death, but this, Barney says, is her misunderstanding. “I was interested in the need to have a dramatic ending,” he explains, “but in terms of the ‘Cremaster’ cycle I also wanted the story to bite its own tail and return to ‘Cremaster 1.’” In a related scene, we see the Queen’s Giant (Barney, again), standing thigh-deep in Budapest’s opulent Gellert Baths. The warm water and a sextet of nude water nymphs are about to precipitate the final act in the “Cremaster” saga, which is the long-delayed descent of the male testes. But maybe not, for at this moment a flock of Jacobin pigeons, all-white birds with impressive feather ruffs, flies upward toward the painted ceiling, bearing colored ribbons that are attached to the Giant’s scrotum. Do the birds (which were trained for the role by the artist Mary Farley, Barney’s wife at the time) hijack and restore the embattled organs to their nondifferentiated state, which they enjoyed in “Cremaster 1”? Does art triumph over biology? Is it art at all, or just pre-

tentiously gorgeous nonsense? Whatever you make of it, the scene, with its ravishing colors, amazing images, and lush operatic score by Jonathan Bepler, Barney’s composer of choice, is hilariously Wagnerian in its over-the-top ambivalence.

Matthew Barney may be the first American artist whose early ambition was to play professional football. Growing up in Boise, Idaho, where his father ran a food-services company, he had been the quarterback on a high-school team that won the state championship one year and was runner-up for it the next. He had a great arm, but he wasn’t quite big enough for the Pac-10 teams he wanted to play for (“I’m six-zero, if I stand up straight”), and so, being a top student and president of his senior class, he went to Yale instead. Yale didn’t offer athletic scholarships, and Barney’s father, who was having financial problems, couldn’t afford the tuition there. “Matthew looked at me,” Robert Barney remembers, “and said, ‘Don’t worry, I’ll make it happen.’ And he did. To be honest, I was always so impressed with Matthew that I often felt he was way ahead of me.” Barney’s parents had been divorced when Matthew was fifteen; Marsha Gibney, his mother, who had a graduate degree in studio art, had moved to New York. Barney and his older sister, Tracy, stayed in Boise but visited Marsha on their vacations, and it was she who inspired Barney’s interest in contemporary art.

Marsha had lined up a job for him in New York the summer he graduated from high school, as a carpenter’s assistant, but it fell through, and then somebody told him he should try modelling. The Click agency hired him on the spot. His lean, chiselled look was perfect for Ralph Lauren, J. Crew, and several other clients, and during the next four years his modelling fees put him through Yale—at the expense of his football career. (Ivy League athletes can’t appear to endorse products.) It was a tough decision. Football had been the ruling passion of his school years. He loved the physical contact, and the training, and he loved “the thing that happens when you’re a drop-back passer, and in that chaos of people you see a hole and know you have to throw there.” His other sport in high school had been wrestling, but it was football that he lived for. After making his decision, at any rate, he didn’t waste time



“So much is written, so little advanced.”

regretting it. He registered for premed studies at Yale, with the idea of eventually becoming a plastic surgeon. After two semesters, though, he dropped out of premed and switched to the art department.

He'd been getting more and more interested in art, going to the New York galleries on weekends and hanging out with Marsha's artist friends. Yale's undergraduate art department is not particularly distinguished, but its graduate School of Art attracts gifted students from all over the country. A couple of these students soon noticed Barney, and one of them, Michael Rees, pulled strings so that he could have his work looked at by visiting artists from New York. Rees even arranged for him to get a private studio to work in—rare for an undergraduate. What impressed everybody was how hard Barney worked. "There was a lot of rigor at Yale," according to Leo Villareal, who was a class behind Barney in the undergraduate art department. "But Matthew was more focussed than anyone else, more unyielding." He did a lot of abstract drawings and paintings, and a lot of sculptures that seemed to come out of minimal and process art—Villareal remembers steel shelves holding objects that looked like animal organs stuffed inside condoms—and in his junior and senior years he began experimenting with video and performance art. He did a series of "drawing restraint" pieces, in which he'd tether himself with a rope and then struggle against it to climb up a ramp and draw something on the wall. "I was trying to use my own experience as an athlete," he told me, "thinking about how the body functions in training—how the muscle breaks down under resistance and then heals larger and stronger. I was trying to use that process of resistance to create form."

His senior-thesis project was a two-part video called "Field Dressing," which he shot and then presented in two rooms of the Payne Whitney Gymnasium at Yale. The first part showed Barney, wearing football cleats, athletic gloves, a Speedo bathing cap, and a complicated harness suspended from the ceiling, strenuously winching himself up and down and sideways above a large bed of Vaseline, which he periodically scooped up and applied to the various orifices of his nude body—eyes, nose, mouth, navel, anus, genitals. (Vaseline, a training-room lubricant with multiple uses, made its

début here as an art material.) In the second video, he wore a full-length white wedding gown, and performed an enigmatic procedure involving metal cylinders, a wrestling mat, and a hydraulic jack. "Seeing him metamorphose from male to female, in that male gymnasium with all that athletic equipment around—it was riveting," said the artist Alice Aycock, who taught sculpture at Yale. "And he did it with such honesty, no showboating. It was stunningly beautiful, but there was also a discomfort level which I liked a lot."

Barney graduated in 1989, came to New York, and kept right on working, first in Brooklyn and then in a studio on Leroy Street that he shared with Michael Rees. He'd quit modelling by then. He already knew quite a few people in the art world, and there was interest in his work almost immediately. His "Field Dressing" videos appeared in a group show at the Althea Viafora gallery in 1990. Clarissa Dalrymple, who ran the Petersburg Gallery and had a way of spotting new talent before anyone else, offered him a show early in 1991. Two weeks before the opening, the gallery folded, and she asked her friend Barbara Gladstone, whose gallery showed a lot of cutting-edge art, to look at Barney's work. Gladstone and Richard Flood, the director of her gallery (he is now chief curator at the Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis), went separately to Barney's new studio—he had moved by then to West Thirteenth Street, in the meatpacking district—and both of them were hugely impressed. "He took me downstairs to this empty basement, freezing cold, where he had a Vaseline-covered bench that made me gasp," Gladstone said. "It was unearthly, and ghostly. I'd never seen material used that way—drawings in picture frames made of self-lubricating plastic, objects made out of cast tapioca. Everything had a very specific meaning, which he talked about as though it were common knowledge. When he talked, it made sense, although ten minutes later you'd go, 'Huh?'" To Flood, the artist was as extraordinary as the art. "His notion of what a work of art could be was completely different from anything that was happening at that moment," Flood told me. "Matthew

often seems like every mother's favorite son, but bringing you the most outrageous information!"

Where did this well-behaved, twenty-three-year-old kid from Idaho get his information, and what gave him the confidence to make art out of petroleum jelly and tapioca and athletic equipment? One clue, maybe, was his graduation speech to the Class of 1985 at Boise High School, in which he drew an extended analogy between the voyage of life and the path of the sperm. There was nothing especially provocative about it—the school authorities had O.K.'d the text in advance, none too happily—and the

audience's nervous giggles over certain phrases were capped by enthusiastic cheers at the end. But it was not the sort of analogy you expect at high-school graduations, and it reflected two things about the outgoing class president: that he did not feel constrained by people's expectations, and that he had an absorbing interest in the physiology of the human body. "Matthew thinks through his body," his mother, who now lives fairly close to Barney's studio and who works as a legal reader and editor, told me. "As a young child, he would run right into you, instead of stopping and saying hi. Very strong and very physical." Reading was a problem for him—he still has difficulty finishing a book—and he was "not good at intimacy," according to Michael Rees, but he made up for both those failings with what another friend calls an "almost shamanistic" ability to find out what he needed from other people.

Barbara Gladstone couldn't give him a show until the fall of 1991, but she was so excited by the work that she recommended it to Stuart Regen, her son, who presented it in May and June at his gallery, Regen Projects, in Los Angeles, where it created a stir. *Artforum*, the high-concept art journal, put Barney on the cover of its summer issue, and, when a somewhat different version of the show came to Barbara Gladstone's that October, the opening was an art-world event. Hundreds of people crowded in to see an eighty-seven-minute video of Barney driving ice screws into the gal-





lery's ceiling and climbing across it, then descending to a walk-in refrigerator that contained, among other strange objects, a version of the Vaseline bench that had made Gladstone gasp. The actual refrigerator and bench were part of the show, along with a dumbbell made of Vaseline, a curling bar made of cast tapioca, a football jersey with the numerals 00 (for Jim Otto, the legendarily resilient center for the Oakland Raiders), an exercise mat, some gynecological instruments, and a second video that showed Barney, looking very much like Audrey Hepburn in high heels and a long black cocktail dress, straining to push a football blocking sled. After years of dreary conceptual art works that lectured the viewer about gender and identity and sexual politics, here was something to *look* at, something so visually engrossing that people stayed for hours. Plenty of viewers hated it, of course. Hilton Kramer, in the *Observer*, wrote, "We all know that there is now almost nothing that someone won't do in public in the name of art, no matter how stupid or nasty." A few feminists detected rampant machismo, and the gay contingent, after checking and finding out that Barney was irredeemably straight (he was dating Mary Farley at the time), dismissed it all as "faux gay." Most of the reviews were enthusiastic, however; searching for precedents, critics men-

tioned Joseph Beuys's animal-fat sculptures, Bruce Nauman's enigmatically ominous videos, and Jeff Koons's self-enchanted sexual icons. "Mr. Barney is the central protagonist in his art," the *Times*' critic Roberta Smith wrote, "but he plays his roles with a self-effacing concentration that renders him almost invisible: the vehicle of the work, not its star."

"The whole thing was surprising to me," Barney recalls. "When I was in school, finishing up and heading for New York, I didn't think the commercial galleries would be interested in what I was doing. I was quite content with the idea of showing at the alternative spaces, like the Mattress Factory, in Pittsburgh, or the Capp Street Project, in San Francisco, doing site-specific pieces. But the climate in New York had changed."

It had indeed. The collapse of the overhyped nineteen-eighties art market had left a lot of insiders looking for something new and different, and Barney's intense and physically demanding performances and his weird mixture of sports metaphors, medical instruments, and outlandish materials were all of that. "There was a huge buzz immediately," according to Barbara Gladstone. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art gave him a one-man show that December; the following year, he was invited to show at Documenta IX, in Kassel, Ger-

many, the most important of the big international art exhibitions; and in 1993 he was in both the Whitney Biennial and the Venice Biennale, where he won the Europa 2000 prize. Not since Jasper Johns, in the late nineteen-fifties, had a young artist made such an impact. Like Johns, moreover, Barney was able to resist the lure of celebrity, which had seduced and eventually jilted a number of the nineteen-eighties art stars. Ignoring the publicity machine that was all too ready to play up his exotic credentials—football player, male model—he avoided art-world parties and interviews, lived austere, and channelled his prodigious energy into new work.

"Drawing Restraint 7," his contribution to the Whitney Biennial, was a three-channel video excursion into Greek mythology. The action here is colorful and oddly disturbing but relatively uncomplicated, something that could not be said about "OTTOshaft," the video-and-installation work that Barney presented in an underground parking garage at Documenta IX. In "OTTOshaft," the video action centers on two main characters, Jim Otto and Harry Houdini (played by Barney), who engage in a competition—nonverbal, of course—to steal the "Hubris Pill" and subject it to what Barney describes as "metabolic changes related to the digestive process, from glucose to sucrose, to petroleum

jelly, tapioca, meringue, and then poundcake, a complex carbohydrate. If it gets to poundcake, then, as a bagpipe, it can play 'Amazing Grace.' (This is one of the explanations that seem to make sense when Barney is talking.) There is a lot of vigorous physical activity in "OTTOshaft," and many striking and largely inexplicable images, but, as far as I can make out, the bagpipe never does get to play "Amazing Grace."

Harry Houdini had taken hold of Barney's imagination at Yale, when he was just starting to make performance pieces. The famous escape artist, whose

most spectacular feats involved letting himself be manacled hand and foot, confined in a straitjacket and/or a locked safe, and dropped into freezing waters, from which he would miraculously free himself within two or three minutes, became for Barney the Character of Positive Restraint, the personification of self-discipline as a catalyst to creativity. Jim Otto was Houdini's antithesis. He had been the Oakland Raiders' iron man, the center who never missed a game, and who absorbed so much punishment that he ended his fifteen-year career playing on two prosthetic knees. Reached

in California, where he is "still involved with the Oakland Raiders" organization, Otto had never heard of Barney and was surprised to learn of his role in Barney's art. "I'm flattered, I guess," he said. I did not tell him that the 00 he wore on his jersey signifies to Barney a "roving rectum," a body subject to penetration and to the indiscriminate expenditure of energy. In "OTTOshaft," his character is taught to sing "Amazing Grace" by someone who is a dead ringer for the Raiders' famously aggressive owner, Al Davis, but who is in fact Marsha Gibney, transformed by makeup and



Richard Serra, who plays the Master Architect, and Mullins, opposite, in scenes from "Cremaster 3" set in the Guggenheim.

her son's minimal, Zen-like direction.

Not many people saw "OTTOshaft" at Documenta, because of its out-of-the-way location. Those who did were impressed, or perplexed, or both. Nicholas Serota, the director of the Tate Museum, in London, was so impressed that he got his museum to buy it. The person it had the biggest impact on, however, was Barney himself. Parts of the piece showed Barney climbing up and down four different elevator shafts in four separate buildings. "I began to think about how expansive that notion could be," Barney told me. "You could take an idea and expand it over four countries, and still understand it as a single thing. 'OTTOshaft' was the transition." Soon after this, he made his first drawing for what would become the "Cremaster" cycle. It showed a rough, bagpipe-like form whose pipes emerged in five different locations: "Bronco Stadium," in Boise; "White Sands/Columbia Icefield"; the "Chrysler Building," in Manhattan; "Ireland"; and "Bath House/Istanbul."

Geography was the spur—a longitudinal arc stretching from west to east, with five points of entry, each one rich in autobiographical meaning. Barney's high-school team had played its home games in Bronco Stadium. A few years earlier, when he was in junior high, his father had taken him on a five-day bike trip in the Canadian Rockies, from Banff up to the ice fields where, as Barney remembers it, "the mountains are bigger than in Idaho, and you feel like you're seeing the source of something." Manhattan was the place he had chosen to live as an adult, and the Chrysler Building, with its dazzling stainless-steel skin, was a mirror that reflected east and west. Barney's ancestors on both sides had come from Ireland; as he started investigating the region, though, his focus shifted to the Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea. And Istanbul—well, Istanbul gave way to Budapest, the birthplace of Erich Weiss, who became Harry Houdini, the Character of Positive Restraint and Barney's alter ego. The five films follow this arc in chronological order, but they were not made chronologically. "Cremaster 4" came first, in 1994, followed by "Cremaster 1" (1995), "Cremaster 5" (1997), "Cremaster 2" (1999), and "Cremaster 3," the longest (at three hours) and by far the most ambitious, whose world première,

at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York last spring, made me think of the old gag "Longer than 'Parsifal,' but not as funny."

Shall we march, you and I, through the "Cremaster" cycle, deciphering its cosmologies, symbolic connections, and bifurcating narrative threads? No, we won't. Let's go instead to the Ritzy Cinema, on the Brixton Oval, in South London, where, last October, Barney and several members of his crew were building, in the lobby, a massive object that would recapitulate the cycle in the form of an abstract sculpture. The sculpture had to be finished by October 25th, three days away, in time for the London première of "Cremaster 3." The crew should have been frantic, but nobody seemed to be, certainly not Matt Ryle, the all-purpose operations chief, or Jessica Frost, Barney's unflappable assistant, or Barney himself, who at the moment was working on a piece of plastic material with an electric sander.

Barney wore black jeans, a black T-shirt, and black workman's boots. He hadn't shaved lately, and anybody's mother would have said he needed to gain a few pounds. The project was unusual, though, because neither he nor anyone else had been staying up until three or four in the morning to work on it. One of the things that make the crew so loyal to Barney is that he works harder than any of them, doing whatever needs to be done, including scut work like sanding. But Barney and Björk had a three-week-old baby girl named Isadora, and he'd been going home for dinner. Barney and Björk have managed so far to keep their careers separate and their private life inviolate. This is no small feat, inasmuch as Björk, a musical phenomenon who released her first album when she was eleven, is an international superstar. Her solo albums sell in the millions, and her performance in Lars von Trier's film "Dancer in the Dark,"

whose score she co-wrote, won her an Oscar nomination in 2001 and a best-actress award at the Cannes Film Festival. Björk's Web site makes no mention of Barney, their relationship, or Isadora.

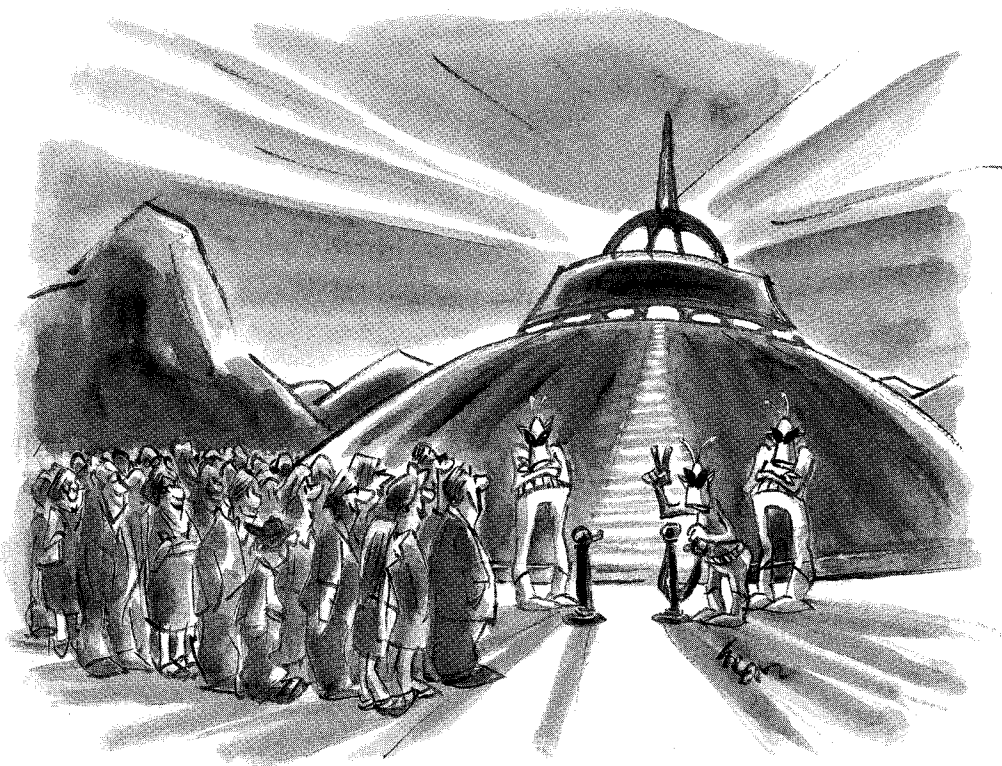
Courteous and friendly in a reserved, low-key way, Barney walked me around the sculpture, which took up most of the lobby. It was an enormous, reinforced-plywood mold with curving contours, four feet high by more than sixteen feet wide, filled with a buttery-yellow mixture of three parts petroleum jelly to one part wax—ten tons of it, Barney said, trucked in from a factory in the Midlands and pumped hot into the mold. The mixture was cooling more slowly than anticipated; they had planned to unbolt and take away the mold this afternoon, but the jelly hadn't solidified enough. Hanging over the sculpture were five television monitors, arranged pentagonally, on which the five "Cremaster" films would run continuously during the three weeks that the sculpture remained on view. "I'm taking pleasure in the fact that this is the last piece in the 'Cremaster' cycle," Barney said.

When I asked him how the sculpture related to the films, Barney located a battered canvas backpack, shuffled through a mess of papers, and pulled out a somewhat crumpled line drawing of what looked like a pig lying on its back. This, he explained, was a sort of bird's-eye view of the sculpture, and its contours followed the narrative line of the five films. "I've come to think of 'Cremaster 1' as the spark of the idea," he said. "'Cremaster 2' speaks to the first rejection of that idea, '3' to the phase of falling in love with the idea, '4' to a sort of panic, realizing that a resolution is near, and '5' to a split, double ending—the release and eventual death of the idea, and a cycling back to 'Cremaster 1.'" Stacked against the wall on one side were some big panels made of white plastic, in different shapes. Barney explained that when the plywood mold was taken away he and his crew would push these panels into the jelly to complete the sculpture. "Once we slide the plates in, the jelly will spill out around them," he said. "It'll be kind of a mess. The sculpture will collapse and then it'll stay."

The Ritzy Cinema project was being produced by Artangel, a London-based arts organization specializing in nonprofit art spectacles. James Lingwood, Artangel's director, has been a Barney admirer



since 1991. In 1992, he invited him to do a project in England, and Barney used the invitation to make the first "Cremaster" video. "I was planning to look for a location in Ireland," Barney told me, "a Druid ring or something ancient," but he kept seeing the Isle of Man on maps. The island's scale appealed to him—"It was small enough that it could be dealt with as an object." He went there and did some research, in his usual, unsystematic way—getting postcards and brochures, asking questions, looking into local legends and customs such as the annual Tourist Trophy motorcycle race around the island, which draws contestants from many countries. "Cremaster 4" was made on a shoestring budget (two hundred thousand dollars) in less than a year. It has two linked narrative actions, the first being a race between a pair of motorcycle-and-sidecar teams, who speed off in opposite directions and represent "ascending" and "descending" tendencies. The other action centers on a dandified, red-haired satyr in a white suit (played by Barney), who tap-dances a hole in the floor of a seaside pavilion, falls through it into the sea, then wriggles and squirms (with immense effort) up a narrow tunnel that's partially blocked by knoblike growths and clogged with Vaseline. There are also three "faeries"—female bodybuilders whose bodies, even when nude, appear to be of indeterminate sex—and a Loughton ram, a breed of sheep native to the Isle of Man, with two pairs of curved horns, one going up and the other going down. The underwater scenes had to be shot in Florida, because the waters around the Isle of Man were too cold and murky. Barney would go under carrying forty pounds of weight, and when his breath ran out somebody would swim over and blow air into his mouth. "I hired an instructor from the scuba-diving school to help us," he told me, "but she lasted only one day. She said, 'I've never met people who have less regard for their lives.'" The production costs of "Cremaster 4" were paid for largely by Artangel, Barbara Gladstone, and the Cartier Foundation, in Paris. In



spite of rapidly escalating expenses, Gladstone and Barney managed to finance the four other films largely by selling art works that are generated by the "Cremaster" story—sculptures, drawings, photographs, and limited-edition videodisks in elaborate sculptural vitrines.

In spite of the pressure he was under to finish his London sculpture, Barney found several occasions to sit down and answer questions. Sometimes the answers were punctuated by long silences, and sometimes they just petered out in mid-sentence. We did best, I found, when I asked him about specific, practical things, such as why, in "Cremaster 5," he had insisted on having Ursula Andress play the Queen of Chain. "I wanted the character to manifest some kind of"—long pause—"extreme physical essence," he said. "Ursula was one of the first athletic sex symbols, or at least that's how I remembered her. I remember the strength of her shoulders in 'Dr. No,' and thinking how her ears were higher than her eyes. She had a kind of"—even longer pause, chin in hand—"the way you think of automotive design, where the rear end is higher than the front, to make it look like it's moving faster. There was a sort of violence to her physical-

ity that I always felt was very attractive."

Barney overcame Andress's reluctance to play the part by going to see her in Rome several times. He can be implacably persuasive. Chelsea Romersa, who was the line producer on "Cremaster 5," says that the people they deal with usually give him what he wants, "even though they think he's crazy." Romersa is constantly asked to do things like find Asian dancers under five feet tall, or contract for a hundred and forty-four truckloads of salt so that Barney can build a salt arena on the Bonneville Salt Flats. In order to measure the distance from the Lanchid Bridge, in Budapest, to the river below, so she could have custom-made a bungee cord of the right length for Barney's plunge in "Cremaster 5," Romersa stole a spoon from the Gellert Hotel, tied a spool of fishing line to it, and dropped it over the bridge's railing. Barney's bungee-cord leap, at dawn on an icy January morning, looked so exhilarating that several crew members wanted to do it, too, and did. Team spirit keeps the energy level up on Barney's projects. For Romersa, it's like being part of an extended family, and "the perversity level makes it less boring than most jobs."

In "Cremaster 1," where the bliss of sexual nondifferentiation is undisturbed

by any hint of violence, an all-female cast inhabits two blimps that hover over Bronco Stadium, while sixty chorus girls, dressed by Isaac Mizrahi and shod by Manolo Blahnik, move in time to melodies from nineteen-thirties Busby Berkeley musicals, and form patterns on the stadium's blue Astro-Turf which relate to the undifferentiated reproductive system. This feminization of Barney's football past had intrigued me, but Barney preferred to talk about the stadium itself, and its goalposts, whose shape "defines nondifferentiation more than any character does."

Things get a lot more complicated in "Cremaster 2," where landscape, Mormonism, and the murderer Gary Gilmore are major characters. Barney explained to me that he was drawn to the Gilmore story because, in its sordid way, it "was like a version of the whole 'Cremaster' dilemma, of a character in conflict with his destiny, and I suppose it also attracted me because Gilmore was a person who had lived almost his entire life in confinement." Barney had read in "The Executioner's Song," Norman

Mailer's book about Gilmore, that Gilmore's grandmother may have had an illegitimate child by Houdini. He approached Mailer and talked him into playing the part of Houdini in the film. "I'm seventy-five years old," Mailer remembers saying, "I'm arthritic, it's all I can do to tie my shoelaces, and you want me to play Houdini?" And he said, "It's all right, we'll shoot around you." Barney even gave him some lines to speak—a great rarity, since there are only about twelve lines of spoken dialogue in the entire "Cremaster" cycle. Mailer (who edited his lines) is now a big Barney fan. "He does things that no one has ever done in movies," Mailer told me. "For people who want to follow the story, it's hopeless, they'll hate the work. But there's an intensity of perception, and a visceral experience you have when you watch his stuff which is extraordinary."

Things were still calm at the Ritzy Cinema on the morning of October 24th, the day before the opening, when Barney and his crew started to remove the wooden framework around the

wax-and-petroleum-jelly sculpture. Matt Ryle unbolted a section in the back, and carried it out through the newly installed lobby doors. As other crew members took away more sections, it became evident that the surface of the huge, yellow mass was sinking in the middle. It sank several inches, quite rapidly, and then it began to pull away from the mold in several places. Ryle tried to brace the unbolted side with a plank. He put his whole weight against it, but the mass kept sinking and sliding. Nobody said anything. Ryle finally got a two-by-four wedged between the bottom of the plank and the lobby wall, stabilizing the flow in that area. The crew kept removing parts of the mold. The mass kept right on moving, and Ryle and Barney improvised ways to contain it, bolting plastic forms to the floor in certain places. Within half an hour, the sculpture's level had sunk about a foot. The yellow stuff was oozing out onto the blue Astro-Turf (in homage to Bronco Stadium) that covered the floor, but what had looked to me like a full-scale disaster, or, at the least, like a wholly unexpected variation on the lost-wax method of making sculpture, was apparently nothing of the kind. "We're at the mercy of the material," Barney observed, with a smile that was just short of seraphic.

"The Vaseline is behaving like I've never seen it behave," he said, somewhat later. "I think it's because of the amount of the mass and the force behind it. You're getting the kind of shearing that you see in glacial ice. If you're out on a glacier for any length of time, you feel like everything's moving, but you can't see it moving. Which is lovely, that feeling. You have a little of that here." I had to leave around three that afternoon. I learned later that Barney and his crew were there all night, pushing plastic plates into the still unstable jelly.

The opening was set for seven-forty-five the next evening. I got there on time, and found the Ritzy already jammed with people. Most of them were in another lobby, adjacent to the one with the sculpture, because the sculpture had taken over all but a few feet of the blue Astro-Turf. It had more or less stopped moving now. It looked like an avalanche, with jagged fissures, and hills and valleys, and crumpled areas where it had piled up on itself. Above it, the five screens were



"You'll like my parents. They're very child-centered."

ablaze with scenes from the five “Cremaster”s, whose soundtracks clashed together discordantly. Barney, wearing the same loose black shirt he’d had on earlier, looked tired but extremely alert. I asked him whether he’d expected the sculpture to behave the way it had. “The intention was to emphasize the entropic nature of the ‘Cremaster’ cycle,” he replied, a bit formally. Then, grinning, he said, “It failed more than I thought it would. But I’m very happy with it. You have to surrender a certain control. And the ‘Cremaster’ cycle is this way.”

At eight o’clock, the crowd began moving into the main auditorium to watch “Cremaster 3.” Having seen it twice before, I thought I might not stay, but I watched the first few scenes and ended up getting hooked and staying through the whole three (very long) hours. It’s not as though one’s interest in “Cremaster 3” never wavers. Some scenes drag on forever. But the sense of a completely realized, alternative world is so strong, and so many shots are visually enthralling, that disbelief becomes easy to suspend. Besides, I kept seeing things I hadn’t noticed before, or had seen differently. Any film that manages to put together, for example, a battle between two real-life giants; a zombie emerging from the grave; a six-car demolition derby in the lobby of the Chrysler Building; a trotting race run by dead horses; a stunning, blond athlete named Aimee Mullins, who happens to be a double amputee, playing several different roles, the first of which has her slicing potatoes with a metallic device attached to her prosthetic leg; the previously noted interlude in the Guggenheim Museum, with Barney scaling the walls; a Maypole dance inside the spire of the Chrysler Building, with colored ribbons floating down from the top and in through the triangular windows; the killing of the Master Architect (played by Richard Serra, the sculptor) by the Entered Apprentice (played by Matthew Barney, the sculptor); and much more, including a final scene in which the Irish giant flings a stone into the sea, where—in time for “Cremaster 4”—it becomes the Isle of Man, well, a film like this may be one that only a Dick Cheney could walk out on without a frisson of self-doubt.

Hubris is a recurring motif in “Cremaster 3.” The Entered Apprentice is

guilty of it when he tries to shortcut the Masonic rituals, and the Master Architect is “Hubris incarnate”—as Nancy Spector, the exhibition’s curator and organizer, writes in the five-hundred-and-thirty-page Guggenheim catalogue—for “attempting to become god on Earth.” Both of them are punished by death, as the classical myths require. The Chrysler Building, which functions as a central character in its own right, is also afflicted with hubris. “I wanted it to have a greater ambition than any of the other characters in any of the other pieces,” Barney told me.

New York’s glittering, deliriously playful skyscraper escapes permanent damage, however, and this leads me to wonder whether Barney himself counts on a similar leniency. He has had remarkably few bad reviews in his career so far, but he may be knocking against the hubris barrier. Soon after the premiere of the final film in New York last spring, you could see T-shirts bearing the slogan “I Survived Cremaster 3.” Robert Storr, until recently the Museum of Modern Art’s Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture, is someone who liked Barney’s early work but who has now become “a doubter,” as he calls it—“a doubter who really believes there’s something there.” In Storr’s view, “Matthew has an extraordinary ability to make images, and from the beginning he had this performative side which was very, very impressive. One thing which makes me doubt him now is that the sculptures are less compelling than they ought to be. Stage props or film props have to be read at a distance, and the camera does something to make them fascinating, horrible, and so on, but, when you see his objects in an exhibition, they lose some of their impact. Matthew’s work rarely becomes an independently fascinating object. I also think his films are overly long, and the camera work is repetitive, and often agonizingly slow. In a way, what Matthew is doing is making great tableaux, but he’s not speaking in time in a way that’s really effective, and that’s the problem.” Storr can’t forgive Barney, moreover, for what he did to Richard Serra in “Cremaster 3.” When Serra flings hot Vaseline against a wall, the unmistakable reference is to his own thrown-lead scul-



tures of the nineteen-sixties, works that had a big influence on Barney. “That’s the way to kill the father,” Storr said, “to make him travesty his own work on camera.”

The Guggenheim exhibition—scheduled to open last year but postponed by the financially troubled museum—will give people a chance to see Barney’s work the way he wants it seen, with sculpture, drawings, and photographs shown alongside the videos.

Barney is grateful for the larger audience that the “Cremaster” films have brought him, but in his mind the cycle was always a sculptural project. The exhibition, which drew big crowds and near-ecstatic reviews in its appearances, in the summer and

fall of last year, at the Museum Ludwig, in Cologne, and the Musée d’Art Moderne, in Paris, will fill almost the entire space of the uptown Guggenheim. It is the culmination of eight years of work, and Barney clearly seems to be at a turning point in his life. When I asked what he had in mind to do next, he was silent for a long time, drumming a pencil on his knee. “One of the things I’m thinking about a lot,” he said finally, “is how to do something live, a real-time situation, maybe in a proscenium space.”

He’s never done that; all his performing to date has been done in private, and videotaped. “I love theatre,” he went on to say, “but not the kind of dramatic projection that’s used to reach an audience. I’m not interested in sitting in a theatre and having emotion thrown at me. The thing that the ‘Cremaster’ cycle tries to solve is how the narrative can be relieved of that role as the carrier of emotion, and how architecture and landscape can sort of take on the burden. But the film process, with its editing and perfecting of details, is less interesting to me right now than the condition of live performance.” I asked whether he had finished with the theme of sexual nondifferentiation. “All that has something to do with the way I’ll be thinking,” Barney said slowly, “but those projects I definitely feel are finished.”

A lot of people are wondering what’s next for Matthew Barney. If we consider that the prevailing metaphor of the “Cremaster” cycle was pre-genital, there’s no telling what he’ll bring us when the creative organs fully descend. ♦

THE OLD MAN AND THE GUN

Forrest Tucker had a long career robbing banks, and he wasn't willing to retire.

BY DAVID GRANN

Just before Forrest Tucker turned seventy-nine, he went to work for the last time. Although he was still a striking-looking man, with intense blue eyes and swept-back white hair, he had a growing list of ailments, including high blood pressure and burning ulcers. He had already had a quadruple bypass, and his wife encouraged him to settle into their home in Pompano Beach, Florida, a peach-colored house on the edge of a golf course which they'd purchased for their retirement. There was a place nearby where they could eat prime rib and dance on Saturday nights with other seniors for \$15.50 a person, and even a lake where Tucker could sit by the shore and practice his saxophone.

But on this spring day in 1999, while his neighbors were on the fairway or tending to their grandchildren, he drove to the Republic Security Bank in Jupiter, about fifty miles from his home. Tucker, who took pride in his appearance, was dressed all in white: white pants with a sharp crease, a white sports shirt, white suede shoes, and a shimmering white ascot.

He paused briefly in front of the A.T.M. and pulled the ascot up around his face, bandit style. He then reached into a canvas bag, took out an old U.S. Army Colt .45, and burst into the bank. He went up to the first teller and said, "Put your money on the counter. All of it."

He flashed the gun so that everyone could see it. The teller laid several packets of fives and twenties on the counter, and Tucker inspected them for exploding dye packs. Checking his watch, he turned to the next teller and said, "Get over here. You, too."

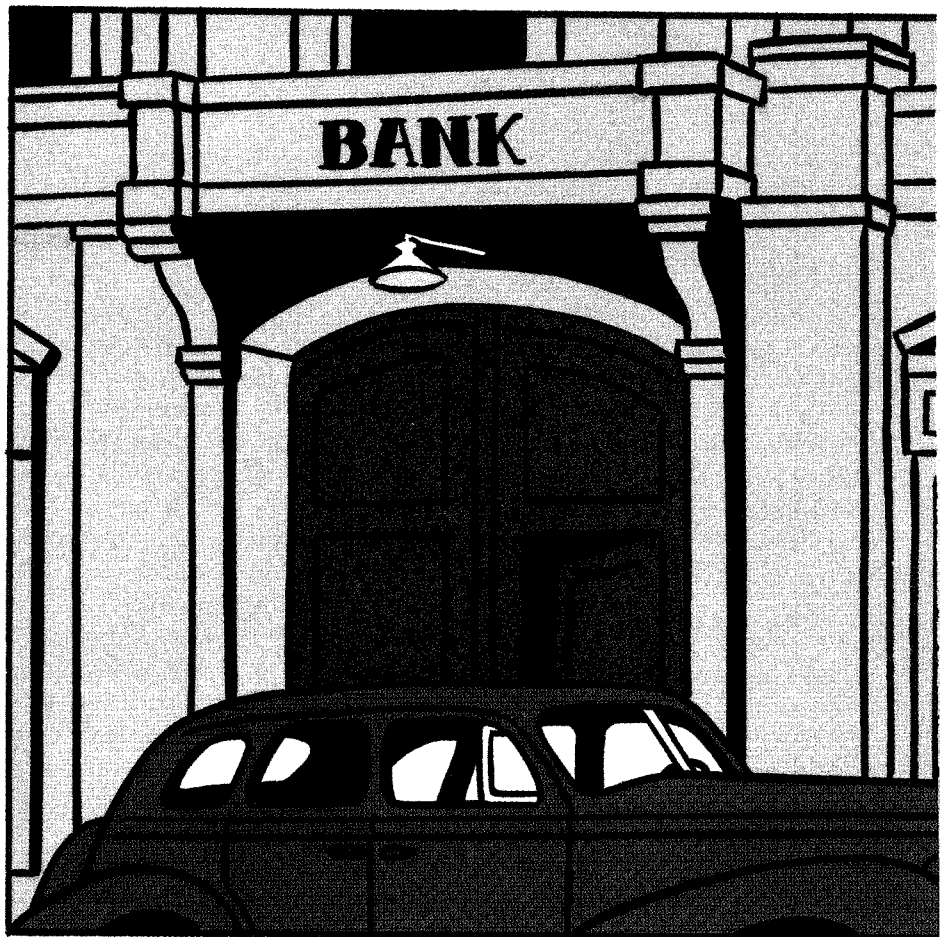
Then he gathered up the thick packets—more than five thousand dollars—and hurried to the door. On his way out, he looked back at the two tellers. "Thank you," he said. "Thank you."

He drove to a nearby lot, where he

had left a "safe" car, a red Grand Am that couldn't be traced to him. After wiping down the stolen "hot" car with a rag, he threw his belongings inside the Grand Am. They included a .357 Magnum, a sawed-off .30 carbine, two black nylon caps, a holster, a can of Mace, a pair of Smith & Wesson handcuffs, two rolls of black electrical tape, a police badge, five AAA batteries, a police scanner, a glass cutter, gloves, and a fishing cap. There was also a small bottle of medicine for his heart. No one seemed to notice him, and he went home, making what appeared to be a clean getaway.

After a brief stop to count the money, he got back in the car and headed out again. As he approached the golf course,

the bills neatly stacked beside him, he noticed an unmarked car on his tail. He turned onto another street, just to make sure. There it was again. Then he spotted a police car pulling out behind him. He hit the gas as hard as he could, trying to outmaneuver them, turning left, then right, right, then left. He went past the North Pompano Baptist Church and the Kraeer Funeral Home, past a row of pink one-story houses with speedboats in the driveways, until he found himself on a dead-end street. As he spun around, he saw that a police car was barricading the road. One of the officers, Captain James Chinn, was reaching for his shotgun. There was a small gap between Chinn's car and a wooden fence, and Tucker, his body pitched forward in his



seat, sped toward it. Chinn, who had spent almost two decades as a detective, later said he had never seen anything like it: the white-haired figure barreling toward him seemed to be smiling, as if he were enjoying the showdown. Then, as the car skidded over the embankment, Tucker lost control and hit a palm tree. The air bags inflated, pinning him against the seat.

The police were stunned when they realized that the man they had apprehended was not only seventy-eight years old—he looked, according to Chinn, “as if he had just come from an *Early Bird Special*”—but one of the most notorious stickup men of the twentieth century. Over a career that spanned more than six decades, he had also become perhaps the greatest escape artist of his generation, a human contortionist who had broken out of nearly every prison he was confined in.

Not long ago, I went to meet Tucker in Fort Worth, Texas, where he was being held in a prison medical center after pleading guilty to one count of robbery and receiving a thirteen-year sentence. The hospital, an old yellow brick

building with a red tiled roof, was on top of a hill and set back off the main road, surrounded by armed guards and razor wire. I was handed a notice that said no “weapons,” “ammunition,” or “metal cutting tools” were allowed, and then escorted through a series of chambers—each door sealing behind us before the next one opened—until I arrived in an empty waiting room.

Before long, a man appeared in a wheelchair pushed by a guard. He wore brown prison fatigues and a green jacket with a turned-up collar. His figure was twisted forward, as if he had tried to contort it one last time and it had frozen in place. As he rose from the wheelchair, he said, “It’s a pleasure to meet you. Forrest Tucker.”

His voice was gentle, with a soft Southern lilt. After he extended his hand, he made his way slowly over to a wooden table with the help of a walker. “I’m sorry we have to meet here,” he said, waiting for me to sit first.

Captain Chinn had told me that he had never met such a gracious criminal: “If you see him, tell him Captain Chinn says hi.” Even a juror who helped

convict him once remarked, “You got to hand it to the guy—he’s got style.”

“So what do you want to know?” Tucker said. “I’ve been in prison all my life, except for the times I’ve broken out. I was born in 1920, and I was in jail by the time I was fifteen. I’m eighty-one now and I’m still in jail, but I’ve broken out eighteen times successfully and twelve times unsuccessfully. There were plenty of other times I planned to escape, but there’s no point in me telling you about them.”

As we sat in a corner by a window overlooking the prison yard, it was hard to imagine that this man’s career had featured wanted posters and midnight escapes. His fingers were knotted like bamboo, and he wore bifocals.

“What I mean by a successful escape is to elude custody,” he continued, squinting out the window. “Maybe they’d eventually get me, but I got away at least for a few minutes.”

He pointed to the places along his arm where he had been shot while trying to flee. “I still have part of a bullet in me,” he said. “They all opened up on me and hit me three times—in both shoulders with M16 rifles, and with buckshot in the legs.”

His voice sounded dry, and I offered to buy him a drink from the vending machine. He followed me and peered through the glass, without touching it. He chose a Dr Pepper. “That’s kind of like cherry soda, isn’t it?”

He seemed pleased. When I gave him the drink, he glanced at the candy bars, and I asked him if he wanted anything else. “If it’s not too much trouble,” he said, “I’d like a Mounds.”

After he finished eating, he began to tell me what he called “the true story of Forrest Tucker.” He spoke for hours, and when he grew tired he offered to continue the next morning. During our conversations, which went on for several days, we always sat in the corner by the window, and after a while he would cough slightly and I would offer to buy him a drink. Each time, he followed me to the machine, as the guard watched from a distance. It was only during the last trip to the machine, when I dropped some money, that I noticed his eyes were moving over everything—the walls, the windows, the guard, the fences, the razor wire. It oc-



ILLUSTRATIONS BY FLOCH

curred to me that Tucker, escape artist par excellence, had been using our meetings to case the joint.

"The first time I broke out of the can I was only fifteen," Tucker told me. "At fifteen, you're pretty fast."

It was the spring of 1936, and he had been incarcerated for stealing a car in Stuart, Florida, a small town along the St. Lucie River which had been devastated during the Depression. He told the police that he took it "just for a thrill," but as he sat in jail the thrill gave way to panic, and when a jailer removed his chains he darted out. Several days later, a deputy discovered him in an orange grove, eating a piece of fruit. "That was escape No. 1," Tucker says. "Such as it was."

The sheriff decided to transfer him to reform school. During his brief flight, however, Tucker had slipped a half-dozen hacksaw blades through the cell window to a group of boys he had met inside. "They hadn't broken out yet and still had the blades," he says. That night, after sawing a bar, he slithered out, helping two other boys squeeze through the tiny opening.

Unlike the others, Tucker knew the area. As a kid, he had spent a fair amount of time by the river, and it was in the river that the police found him and another boy, about an hour later, hiding with just their noses above water. The next day, the Stuart *Daily News* detailed his exploits under the headline "TRIO ESCAPE BY SAWING BARS OF CELL LAST NIGHT . . . SUPPLIED WITH HACK-SAWS, COLD CHISELS AND FILES BY BOY."

"That was escape No. 2," Tucker says. "A brief one."

Like the outlaws he read about in dime novels who were forced into banditry by some perceived injustice, Tucker says that "the legend of Forrest Tucker" began that morning when he was unfairly sent away for only a minor theft. The story, which he repeated even as a boy, eventually spread throughout the town, and over time the details became more ornate, the theft more minor. Morris Walton, who used to play with Tucker as a child, says, "My sense is he spent his life in jail for stealing a bicycle and simply trying to escape. If he became bad, it was only because the system made him that way."

What Walton knew of Tucker's up-

WHITE DOG

First snow—I release her into it—
I know, released, she won't come back.
This is different from letting what,

already, we count as lost go. It is nothing
like that. Also, it is not like wanting to learn what
losing a thing we love feels like. Oh yes:

I love her.
Released, she seems for a moment as if
some part of me that, almost,

I wouldn't mind
understanding better, is that
not love? She seems a part of me,

and then she seems entirely like what she is:
a white dog,
less white suddenly, against the snow,

who won't come back. I know that; and, knowing it,
I release her. It's as if I release her
because I know.

—Carl Phillips

bringing reinforced that impression. His father was a heavy-equipment operator who disappeared when Tucker was six. While his mother struggled in menial jobs in Miami, Tucker was sent to live with his grandmother, who was the tender of the bridge in Stuart. There he built canoes and sailboats out of scrap metal and wood, which he gathered along the riverbank, and taught himself to play the saxophone and the clarinet. "It wasn't like I needed a father to order me around," he says.

But as his reputation for cleverness grew, so did his rap sheet. By his sixteenth birthday, it included charges of "breaking and entering" and "simple larceny." After he escaped from reform school and fled to Georgia, he was sentenced to "be placed and confined at labor in the chain gang." Like all new inmates, he was taken to the blacksmith, where a chain was riveted around both of his ankles. The steel gradually ate into the skin, a condition known as shackle poisoning.

"The guards would give you the first three days to let you get your hands broken in with calluses," Tucker recalls. "But

after that the walking boss would punish you, hit you with his cane or fist. And if you didn't work hard enough the guards would take you in the bathroom and tie your hands behind your back and put a pressure hose in your face and hold it there until you'd sputter and you couldn't breathe."

Although Tucker was released after only six months, he was soon convicted again, for stealing another car, and sentenced to ten years. By now, "we see a man who has been thoroughly cast out by society," Tucker's lawyer later wrote in a court motion. "Marked as a criminal at seventeen years old and constantly railroaded through judicial proceedings without the benefit of counsel, Forrest Tucker was becoming an angry young man." Tucker himself says, "The die was cast." In photographs taken after he was paroled at the age of twenty-four, his hair is cut short and he has on a white T-shirt; his once slender arms are coiled with muscles. His eyes are piercing. People who knew him say that he was extraordinarily charismatic—that girls flocked around him—but they also noted a

growing reservoir of anger. "I think he had this desperate need to show the world that he was *somebody*," one of his relatives says.

At first, Tucker sought work playing the saxophone in big bands around Miami, and he seemed to have harbored ambitions of becoming another Glenn Miller. Nothing came of it, though, and, after a brief failed marriage, he put away his sax and got himself a gun.

The outlaw, in the American imagination, is a subject of romance—a "good" bad man, he is typically a master of escape, a crack shot, a ladies' man. In 1915, when the police asked the train robber Frank Ryan why he did it, he replied, "Bad companions and dime novels. Jesse James was my favorite hero."

When Tucker was growing up, during the Great Depression, the appeal of bank robbers, fuelled by widespread anger over defaults and foreclosures, was reaching its zenith. After the F.B.I. gunned down John Dillinger, in 1934, drove descended on the scene, mopping up his blood with their clothes. At least ten Hollywood films were devoted to Dillinger's life; one of them exclaimed, "His Story Is Written in Bullets, Blood and Blondes!"

Because the holdup demands a public performance, it tends to draw a certain personality: bold, vainglorious, reckless. At the same time, most bank robbers know that the society that revels in their exploits will ultimately demand their elimination, by incarceration or death. "They'll get me," Pretty Boy Floyd once said. "Sooner or later, I'll go down full of lead. That's how it will end."

Indeed, by the time Tucker set out to become an outlaw, in the late nineteen-forties, most of the legendary stickup men had already been gunned down. Still, he began to imitate their style, dressing in chalk-striped suits and two-tone shoes, and he would stand in front of a mirror, pointing a gun at his own reflection. Finally, on September 22, 1950, with a handkerchief tied over his face and a gun drawn in the style of Jesse James, he strode into a bank in Miami and made off with \$1,278. A few days later, he went back to the same place, this time for the entire safe. He was apprehended as he was trying to crack it open with a blowtorch on the roadside.

His career seemed even more fleeting

than that of most bank robbers, but in the county jail Tucker decided he was more than an ordinary stickup man. "It didn't matter to me if they gave me five years, ten years, or life," he says. "I was an escape artist."

He searched the prison for what he called "the weak spot." One day around Christmas, after weeks of looking, he began to moan in pain. The authorities rushed him to the hospital, where doctors removed his appendix. ("A small price to pay," Tucker says.) While convalescing, still chained to his bed, he started to work on the shackles. He had taught himself how to pick a lock using almost anything—a pen, a paper clip, a piece of wire, nail clippers, a watch spring—and after a few minutes he walked out, unnoticed.

He made his way to California, where he went on a spree of robberies, hurtling over counters, pointing his gun, and declaring, "I mean business!" He wore bright checkered suits and sped away in a flamboyant getaway car with tubes along the sides. He even talked like a character in pulp fiction. "This is a stickup, girls," he once said, according to witnesses. "I've got a gun. Be quiet and you won't get hurt."

Hoping to improve his take, Tucker began to cast about for a partner. "I didn't want any nuts or rats," he says, adding,

"I'm from the old school." In the end, he found an ex-con named Richard Bellew, a tall, handsome thief with a high I.Q. and wavy black hair. Like Tucker, Bellew modelled himself on the stickup men of the nineteen-thirties, and he ran with a stage dancer named Jet Blanca. But Tucker chose him for another reason: "He always let me count the dough."

They began to hit one bank after another. After one heist, witnesses said the last thing they saw was a row of suits hanging in the back seat of the getaway car. The heists, which continued for two years, dominated the local headlines, often preempting coverage of the 1952 Presidential election and the McCarthy hearings. Tucker and Bellew were depicted as "armed men" who "terrorized" their "victims," but also as "dramatically attired" "hold-up artists" who "expertly stripped" the tellers of cash, leaving behind "only an impression of competent banditry . . . and one getaway car."

On March 20, 1953, more than two years after Tucker's escape from the hospital, F.B.I. agents surrounded him as he was retrieving loot from a safe-deposit box in San Francisco. Then they went to search the place Tucker had listed as his residence. There, in a spacious apartment in San Mateo, they found a young blond woman who said she had never heard of Forrest Tucker. She was married to a



"Mr. Happy wants to remind us that tragedy plus time equals comedy."



wealthy songwriter, she said, who commuted daily to the city, and they had just moved into a bigger apartment to make room for their five-month-old son. Her husband's name, she told the police, was Richard Bellew. Yet when the officers showed Shirley Bellew a photograph of the bank robber and longtime prison fugitive Forrest Tucker, she burst into tears. "I can't believe it," she said. "He was such a good man, such a good provider."

She recalled how her husband would come home every night and play with their baby, whom they had named Rick Bellew, Jr. "What's going to become of our little baby?" she asked. "What's his name going to be?"

Let me tell you about Alcatraz," Tucker said one day as he sat in the corner of the visiting room, his walker resting against his leg. He had spread a napkin out in front of him and was eating a meatball hero I'd brought him and sipping a Dr Pepper. "There were only fifteen hundred and seventy-six people who ever went there. I was No. 1047."

Alcatraz, or "the Rock," had been converted from a military prison in 1934 as a way to confine the country's most notorious criminals, including George (Machine Gun) Kelly, Robert Stroud (the Birdman of Alcatraz), and Mickey Cohen. At least half of the inmates had previously attempted to break out of other prisons. Surrounded by the freez-

ing San Francisco Bay and its deadly currents, it was built to be escapeproof. Al Capone, who was sent there in 1934, is said to have told the warden, "It looks like Alcatraz has got me licked."

Tucker arrived on September 3, 1953. He was thirty-three. He had been sentenced to thirty years. In his prison photo, he still has on a jacket and tie; his brown hair is brushed back with a touch of oil; he is slightly unshaved but still striking. Within moments, he was stripped naked, and a medical attendant probed his ears and nose and mouth and rectum, searching for any tools or weapons. He was given a blue chambray shirt with his number stamped on it and a pair of trousers, as well as a cap, a peacoat, a bathrobe, three pairs of socks, two handkerchiefs, a pair of shoes, and a raincoat. His cell was so narrow that he could reach out and touch both sides at the same time. "It was so cold in the cellblock you had to sleep with your coat and hat to stay warm," Tucker says.

As he lay in bed, he says, he thought about his wife and child. He remembered the first time he met Shirley Storz, at an event for singles in Oakland. He remembered how they skied at Lake Tahoe and were married in a small ceremony in September of 1951, how she sang in a choral group, and how he'd sit and listen for hours. And he remembered his son being born. "We loved each other," Tucker says of his wife. "I

didn't know how to explain to her the truth—that this was my way of life."

Several weeks after he arrived, a guard roused him from his cell and led him into a tiny room that had a small window. Peering through it, he saw his wife sitting on the other side. He picked up the phone. "It was hard to talk," he recalls. "We had to look at each other through a piece of glass. She told me she had to make a life for herself. I said, 'The best thing you can do is make a life for you and our son.' I told her, 'I won't bother you no matter what, no matter how much I want to. I won't ring your phone.'" A few months later, he received notice that their marriage had been annulled.

By now, Tucker had developed several maxims, including "The more security, the more bizarre the method of escape must be." He began to concoct elaborate schemes with a fellow-inmate named Teddy Green, an escape artist and bank robber who had once dressed as a priest to elude the police and had broken out of the state penitentiary by shipping himself out in a box of rags.

Along with another inmate, they started smuggling tools from their prison jobs, hiding them in the laundry, and planting pieces of steel wool on other prisoners to set off the metal detectors, so that the guards assumed they were broken. They carved holes in their toilet bowls and tucked the tools inside, putting putty over them. At night, they used the



tools to tunnel through the floor, planning to go out by means of the basement.

One day, according to internal prison records, a prisoner in solitary suggested that guards examine the cell toilets; soon a full-scale search was launched. A warden's report summed up the findings:

The result of the shakedown of these toilets was the blow torch as I have mentioned, a bar spreader, a pair of side cutters, a brace and some bits . . . a screwdriver and one or two pieces of wire and a piece of carborundum stone.

All three prisoners were labelled "very dangerous escape risks" and locked in the Treatment Unit, better known as "the hole."

"I remember walking in with no clothes or shoes on," Tucker says. "The steel floor was so cold it hurt to touch it. The only way to stay warm was to keep walking." One night, he heard a haunting sound through the window. He couldn't see anyone outside, but he heard voices from below. They were the guards' children, singing carols. "It was the first children's voices I had heard in years," he says. "It was Christmas Eve."

As the time passed, Tucker began to teach himself the law, and before long he was deluging the court with appeals, which he wrote in a slanting methodical print. Although a prosecutor later dismissed one of his writs as pure

"fantasy," he was granted a hearing in November of 1956. According to Tucker, as well as court records, the night before his court appearance, while being held in the county jail, he complained of pains in his kidneys and was rushed to the hospital. Guards were stationed at every door. When no one was looking, Tucker broke a pencil and stabbed his ankle. Because of the wound, the guards removed his leg irons, strapping him to the gurney with his hands cuffed. As he was being wheeled into the X-ray room, Tucker leaped up, overpowered two guards, and ran out the door. For several hours, he enjoyed the fresh air and the sight of ordinary people. He was apprehended, still in his hospital gown and handcuffs, in the middle of a cornfield.

The brief escape, for which he was tried and convicted, enhanced his reputation as an escape artist. Yet it was not for another twenty-three years, after Tucker had been released and arrested again for armed robbery, that he made his greatest escape. In the summer of 1979, while at San Quentin, a maximum-security facility that jugged out into the ocean and was known among cons as "the gladiator school," Tucker took a job in the prison industries and, with the help of two other inmates, John Waller and William McGirk, secretly gathered together scraps of wood and sheets of Formica, which they cut into strange shapes and hid under tarps. From the

electrical shop, they spirited away two six-foot poles and several buckets. Then, in the furniture workshop, they found the final pieces: plastic dustcovers, paint, and tape, which they stored in boxes labelled "Office Supplies."

On August 9th, after months of preparation, Tucker exchanged nods with both of his confederates in the yard, signalling that everything was ready. While Waller and McGirk stood watch outside the lumber shop, Tucker drew on his childhood experience and began to fashion the pieces into a fourteen-foot kayak. "A hammer was too loud, so I had to use only tape and bolts," Tucker says. He had just enough paint for one side of the craft, the side that would face the guard towers, and as the others urged him to hurry he stencilled on it "Rub-a-Dub-Dub." Waller, who called the fifty-nine-year-old Tucker "the old man," later told a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times*, "The boat was beautiful; I wish my eyes were as blue as that boat."

They wore sailor hats and sweatshirts that Tucker had painted bright orange, with the logo of the Marin Yacht Club, which he had seen on the boats that sailed by. When the guard wasn't looking, they hurriedly put the kayak into the water. As they set out, the winds were blowing more than twenty miles an hour, and massive swells began to swamp the kayak. "The boat didn't leak a drop," Waller said. "We could have paddled to

Australia. It was those damn waves over the side. When we finally reached the edge of the property at Q"—San Quentin—"the son of a bitch sank."

A guard in one of the towers spotted them clinging to the upside-down craft, kicking to shore, and asked if they needed help. They said they were fine, and, as if to prove it, McGirk held up his wrist and yelled, "We just lost a couple of oars, but my Timex is still running!" The guard, unaware that three prisoners were missing, laughed and went back to his lookout.

California soon unleashed a statewide manhunt. Meanwhile, police in Texas and Oklahoma began to report a strange series of holdups. They all had the same M.O.: three or four men would stroll into a grocery store or a bank, flash a gun, demand the money, and speed away in a stolen car. Witnesses invariably noted that they were all, by the standards of the trade, old men. One even wore what appeared to be a hearing aid. The authorities compared them to the elderly thieves in the film "Going in Style," and dubbed them "the Over-the-Hill Gang."

"That was when I was really a good robber," Tucker tells me. He is careful not to admit to any particular crime ("I don't know if they still have jurisdiction") or implicate any of his living partners

("Some of them are still out there"), but he says that by the age of sixty he had at last mastered the art of the holdup.

One day, while we were sitting in the prison visiting room, Tucker leaned forward in his chair and began to teach me how to rob a bank. "First of all, you want a place near the highway," he said, putting on his bifocals, his eyes blinking as if he were imagining a particular layout. "Then you need to case it—you can't just storm in. You need to size it up, know it like your own home."

"In the old days, the stickup men were like cowboys," he continued. "They would just go in shooting, yelling for everyone to lie down. But to me violence is the first sign of an amateur." The best holdup men, in his view, were like stage actors, able to hold a room by the sheer force of their personality. Some even wore makeup and practiced getting into character. "There is an art to robbing a bank if you do it right," Tucker said. Whereas he once cultivated a flamboyant image, he later developed, he said, a subtler, more "natural" style.

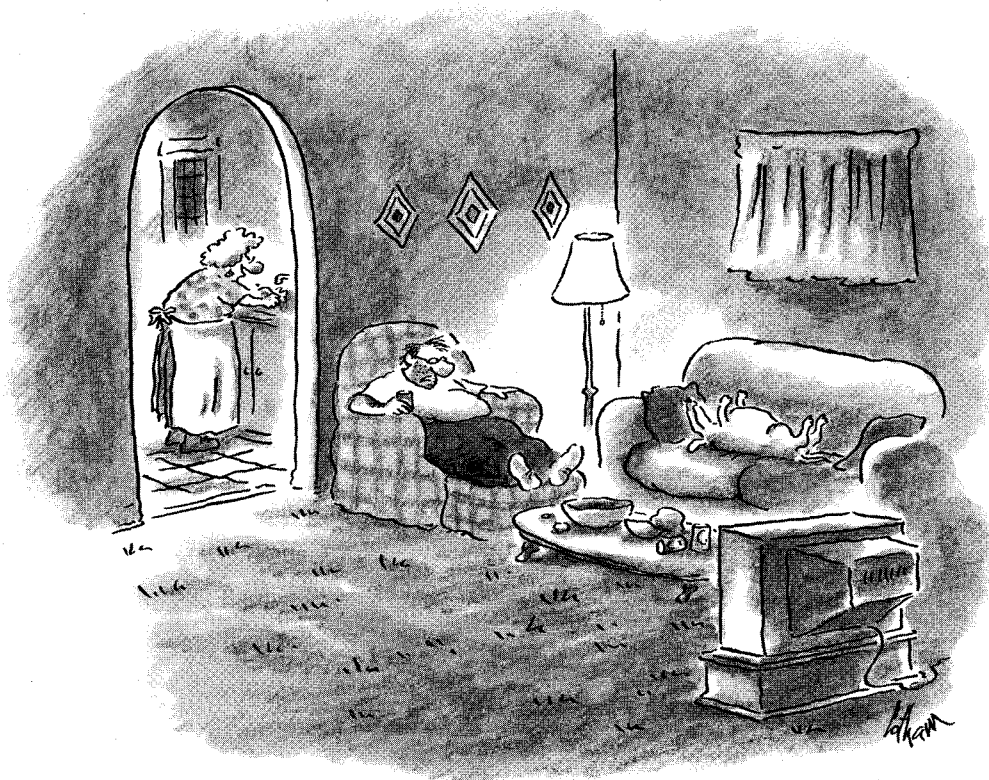
"O.K., the tools," he pressed on. Ideally, he said, you needed nail polish or superglue to cover your fingertips ("You can wear gloves, but in warmer climates they only draw attention"), a glass cutter,

a holster, a canvas bag ("big enough for the dough"), and a gun ("a .38 or semi-automatic, or whatever you can get your hands on"). He said the gun was just "a prop," but essential to any operation.

There was one other thing, he said after a pause. It was the key to the success of the Over-the-Hill Gang and what he still called "the Forrest Tucker trademark": the hearing aid. It was actually a police scanner, he said, which he wired through his shirt; that way, he would know if any silent alarms had been triggered.

He removed a napkin from his pocket and wiped the sweat from his forehead. "Once you've got your cool car parked nearby, you've got your radio, your hands are covered with gloves or superglue, you walk in. Go right up to the manager. Say, 'Sit down.' Never pull the gun—just flash it. Tell him calmly you're here to rob the bank and it better go off without a hitch. Don't run from the bank unless you're being shot at, 'cause it only shows something is going on. Just walk to the hot car, real calm, then drive to the cool car. Rev it up, and you're gone."

After he finished, he seemed satisfied. "I've just given you a manual on how to rob a bank," he said. He reflected on this for a moment, then added, "No one can teach you the craft. You can only learn by doing."



"We'd better stock up on TV snacks in the event of war."

A forty-year-old sergeant on the Austin police force, John Hunt, was assigned to investigate the mysterious holdups of the Over-the-Hill Gang. "They were the most professional, successful robbers that I ever encountered in all my years on the force," Hunt, who is now retired after a thirty-year career, told me. "They had more experience in robbery than we had catching them."

Then a chain-smoker with a drooping mustache and a slight paunch, Hunt spent long days trying to catch the gang. With the advent of high-tech security, there were fewer and fewer traditional bank robbers; most were desperate drug addicts who made off with only a few thousand dollars before they were caught. The Over-the-Hill Gang seemed to defy not just their age but their era.

"They'd get up every day and be on the job," Hunt said. "Just as a welder gets good at welding, or a writer gets good over the years by writing, these guys learned from their mistakes."

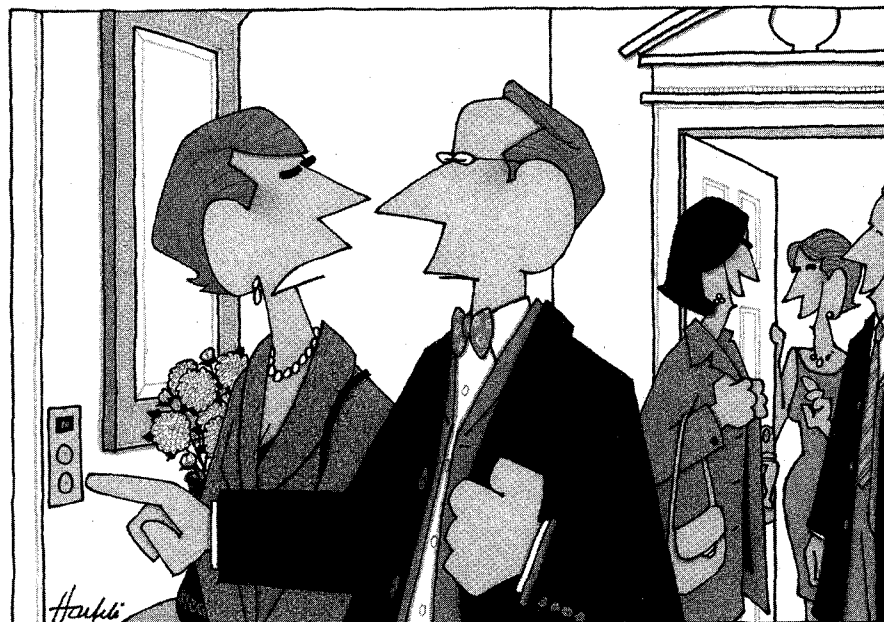
In a one-year span, the Over-the-Hill Gang was suspected in at least sixty robberies in Oklahoma and Texas—twenty in the Dallas-Fort Worth area alone. The gang was also believed to be responsible for holdups in New Mexico, Arizona, and Louisiana. "SENIOR CITIZENS STRIKE AGAIN," one headline blared. "MIDDLE-AGED BANDITS PUZZLE DETECTIVES," another read.

In December of 1980, Hunt and forty other law-enforcement officers from at least three states held a conference in Dallas to figure out how to stop them. "You can't say how many lives they altered by sticking a gun in someone's face," a former F.B.I. agent told me.

Tucker seemed unable to stop, no matter how much money he accumulated. Although there are no official estimates, Tucker—relying on an array of aliases, including Robert Tuck MacDougall, Bob Stone, Russell Johns, Ralph Pruitt, Forrest Brown, J. C. Tucker, and Ricky Tucker—is believed over his career to have stolen millions of dollars, a fleet of sports cars, a bag of yen, and one Sambo's wooden nickel. In the spring of 1983, he embarked on his most audacious heist yet: robbing a high-security bank in Massachusetts in broad daylight by pretending that he and his men were guards making a routine pickup in an armored car. Tucker believed the plan was "a breakthrough in the art." On March 7th, moments before the armored car was scheduled to arrive, they put on makeup and mustaches; Tucker's wig had shrunk in a recent snowstorm, and rather than postpone the operation he decided to do without it.

The teller buzzed them in. Just as they were entering the vault, according to a police report, the manager noticed that "the dark mustache on one man and the white mustache on the other man were not real." One of the "guards" patted his gun and said, "This is a holdup."

Tucker locked the manager and two tellers inside the vault, and escaped with more than four hundred and thirty thousand dollars. But when the police showed the tellers a series of mug shots, they identified, for the first time, the leader of the Over-the-Hill Gang as the same



"When did you become the voice of the disenfranchised?"

man who had broken out of San Quentin in a homemade kayak three years earlier.

As the F.B.I., the local police, and the county sheriffs all tried to track him down, Tucker hid in Florida, checking in daily with Teddy Green, his old Alcatraz confidant. One June morning, Tucker pulled into Green's garage and waited while his friend walked toward the car. "I was looking at him," Tucker recalls, "thinking, My, what a sharp suit!"

A man jumped in front of Tucker's car and yelled, "F.B.I., don't move! You're under arrest."

Agents were everywhere, coming out of cars and bushes. Tucker glowered at Green, convinced that his friend had "rat- ted me out." Although Tucker insists that he never had a pistol—and none was ever found—several agents said they saw one in his hand. "He's got a gun!" one of them yelled, diving to the ground. The garage filled with the sound of gunfire. Bullets shattered the windshield and the radiator. Tucker, who had been hit in both arms and in the leg, ducked below the dashboard and pressed the accelerator, crashing outside the garage. He opened the car door and stumbled onto the street, his hands and face covered in blood. A woman with two children was driving toward him. "As I got closer," the woman later testified, "he started to look bloodier and bloodier—it was all over him—and I thought,

This poor man has been hit by a car."

She offered him a ride, and he climbed into the passenger seat. Then, in her rearview mirror, she saw someone holding a rifle, and her six-year-old son cried out, "Criminal!" When she hesitated, Tucker grabbed the wheel and snapped, "I have a gun—now drive!" Her son began to sob. After a half-mile chase, they veered down a dead-end street. At a muttered "O.K." from Tucker, the woman scrambled out of the car and dragged her children to safety. Then Tucker himself stepped from the car and passed out.

A columnist for the Miami *Herald* summed up the capture of the longtime prison fugitive and leader of the Over-the-Hill Gang this way:

There is something vaguely appealing about Tucker. . . . Old guys are not regularly associated with high crimes. . . . Tucker must also be admired, in a twisted way I admit, for pulling off an incredible escape from San Quentin prison in San Francisco. . . . Tucker might have made a fortune selling the escape yarn to Hollywood and holing up somewhere. Instead he chose to resume the line of work to which he was dedicated. . . . The aging Robin Hood took from the rich, who were probably loaded with insurance.

Tucker's story had, at last, acquired the burnish of outlaw mythology. The battered Rub-a-Dub-Dub had been donated to the Marin Yacht Club and was later placed in a prison museum, and the

Children's Hospital Medical Center in Oakland requested that Tucker be allowed to serve as grand marshal for its upcoming Bath tub Regatta. Amid the clamor, the F.B.I. showed up at a fancy retirement community in Lauderdale, Florida, where Tucker was believed to have been living. An elegant woman in her fifties answered the door. When they asked her about Forrest Tucker, she said she had never heard of the man. She was married to Bob Callahan, a successful stockbroker whom she had met shortly after her first husband died. When the agents explained that Bob Callahan was really Forrest Tucker, a man who had broken out of jail four years earlier, she looked at them in tears. "I told 'em, 'I don't believe a word you're saying,'" she recalled, nearly two decades later. "But they had him. They shot him three times."

An heiress to a modest moving-company fortune who looked, in her youth, a bit like Marilyn Monroe, she remembers meeting Tucker at the Whale and Porpoise, a private club on Oakland Park Boulevard. She had never encountered anyone so kind and gallant. "He came over and asked me to dance, and that was that," she told me.

She recalled how she went to see him in prison ("still in a daze"), not sure what to say or do. When she saw him lying there, pale and bloodied, she was overcome with love for this man who, she learned, had been in a chain gang at sixteen. As he begged her forgiveness, she told me, "All I wanted to do was hold him."

At first, awaiting trial in Miami, Tucker tried to break out of jail, removing a bar in his cell with a hacksaw and climbing onto the roof with a homemade grappling hook. But after his wife promised—to the consternation of her family and friends—to stay with him if he reformed, Tucker vowed to rehabilitate himself. "I told her that from then on I'd only look at ways to escape," he says, adding, "She is one in a million."

He returned to San Quentin, where he was nicknamed "the captain," and where, for the first time, his seemingly impervious constitution began to show its age. In 1986, he underwent a quadruple bypass. Although guards stood by the door in case he tried to escape, he now considered himself strictly a legal contor-

nist. Years earlier, at Alcatraz, he had written an appeal that went all the way to the Supreme Court in which he successfully argued that a judge could not, at sentencing, take into account prior convictions received when the defendant lacked counsel. ("It is time we become just a little realistic in the face of a record such as this one," Justice Harry A. Blackmun wrote in an angry dissent.) Now, with his failing health, Tucker unleashed another flurry of appeals, getting his sentence reduced by more than half. "This is to thank you," he wrote one judge. "It's the first break I ever got in my life. I won't ever need another."



He began to pour all his energy into what he saw as the culmination of his life as an outlaw: a Hollywood movie. Tucker had seen all sorts of films that echoed his life, among them "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang," "Escape from Alcatraz," and "Bonnie and Clyde," and he wanted, at last, to see his story enshrined in the American imagination. He began to put his exploits down on paper, five pages at a time. "No one could have written this inside story of the Rock and what really happened there unless they had personally lived it," he wrote. He devoted two hundred and sixty-one pages to "Alcatraz: The True Story," while working on a second, more ambitious account, which he titled "The Can Opener." In it, he described himself as a throwback "to the highly intelligent, nonviolent type of criminal in the Willie Sutton mold," and, more grandly, as a kind of heroic underdog, pitted against a vast and oppressive system. "Tucker's obsession with freedom and escape has transformed itself into gamesmanship," he wrote. "This is his way of keeping his sanity in a lifetime of being the hunted. Each new 'joint' is a game, a game to outwit the authorities."

In 1993, he was released, at the age of seventy-three, and settled into the peach-colored house in Pompano Beach, which his wife had bought for them. He polished his manuscript and set up a music room in the den, where he gave saxophone and clarinet lessons for twenty-five dollars an hour. "We had a wonderful life," his wife said. Tucker recalls, "We used to go out dancing. She'd dress up real pretty, and I'd show her off." He composed music for

her. "He has all these talents that had been wasted all these years," she told me. From time to time, he played in local jazz clubs. "I got used to being free," he says. But his manuscript failed to captivate people as he had hoped it would—"I called Clint Eastwood's secretary, but she said, 'Unless you have an agent, he won't read it'"—and the author of "The Can Opener" increasingly seemed trapped, an ordinary old man.

Then came the day in 1999 when, at the age of seventy-eight, he painted his fingertips with nail polish, pulled his white ascot up over his face, and burst into the Republic Security Bank with his gun. "He didn't do it for the money," his wife said. "We had a new car, nice home paid for, beautiful clothes. He had everything."

"I think he wanted to become a legend, like Bonnie and Clyde," said Captain Chinn, who apprehended him after what was believed to be his fourth recent robbery in the Florida area. A court psychologist who examined Tucker noted, "I have seen many individuals who are self-aggrandizing, and that would like to make their mark in history . . . but none, I must admit, that I heard that would want to, other than in the movies, go out in a blaze in a bank robbery. It is beyond the realm of psychological prediction."

After Tucker's arrest, the police put him in semi-isolation, fearing that even at seventy-eight he might somehow elude them. Despite his lawyer's pleas that his client could die under such conditions, he was denied bail. "Ordinarily, I would not consider a 78-year-old man a flight risk or a danger to the community," the magistrate said, "but Mr. Tucker has proved himself to be remarkably agile." On October 20, 2000, just before his case was scheduled to go to trial, and with his wife looking on, Tucker pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to thirteen years.

One day, I found a report that the Department of Corrections had compiled, detailing Tucker's life. After pages listing his dramatic holdups and daredevil escapes, it concluded with a different kind of summary:

The defendant does not know the whereabouts of [his] daughter. He stated he did not have an active part in this child's upbringing. . . . The defendant has no knowledge of his son's whereabouts. The defendant did not partake in the rearing of this child.

"I thought he died in an automobile accident," his son, Rick Bellew, told me over the phone after I tracked him down in Nevada, where he was living and working as a printer. "That's what my mom told me to protect me." He didn't know the truth, he said, until he was in his early twenties, when Tucker was about to be paroled. "My mom was afraid he'd come up to me on the street and freak me out."

He said that after his father was taken away the authorities confiscated all their furniture and possessions, which had been paid for with stolen cash. They had to move in with his grandparents, while his mother worked in a factory to support them. "He left us with nothing," he said. "He turned our world inside out."

After Bellew read about Tucker's last arrest, he wrote him a letter for the first time. "I needed to know why he did it," he said. "Why he sacrificed everything."

Although Tucker could never give him a satisfactory answer, they struck up a correspondence, and in one of his letters Tucker told him something he had never expected: Bellew had an older half sister named Gaile Tucker, a nurse who lived in Florida. "I called her up and said, 'Are you sitting down?'" I said, "This is your long-lost brother." She said, "Oh, my God." Later, the two met, studying each other's features for similarities, trying to piece together a portrait of a man they barely knew.

"I don't have any ill feelings," his daughter told me. "I just don't have any feelings."

At one point, Bellew read me part of a letter that Tucker had recently sent him: "I'm sorry things turned out the way they did. . . . I never got to take you fishing, or to baseball games or to see you grow up. . . . I don't ask you to forgive me as there is too much lost but just so you know I wish you the best. Always. Your dad, Forrest."

Bellew said he didn't know if he would continue the correspondence, not because of what Tucker had done to him but because of what he had done to his mother. "He blew my mother's world apart," Bellew told me. "She never remarried. There was a song she used to sing to me called 'Me and My Shadow,' all about being alone and blue. And when she had cancer, and wasn't

going to live much longer, I broke down and she sang that song, and I realized how bittersweet it was. It was her life."

When I visited Tucker's third wife this spring in Pompano Beach, she seemed to be still trying to cope. A small, delicate woman, now in her seventies, she had had several operations and lived alone in their house. "With Forrest gone, there's no one to fix things up," she said. She paused, scanning the den where he used to keep his musical instruments. "The silence is unbearable." She showed me a picture of the two of them, taken shortly after they met. They are standing side by side, their arms touching. He has on a red shirt and tie, and his wavy hair is neatly combed to one side. "God, he used to be so handsome," she said. "When I met him, he was a *doll*."

She turned the picture of him over several times in her hand. "I waited all those years," she said as she walked me outside, wiping her eyes. "I thought we had the rest of our lives together. What am I supposed to do now?"

One of the last times I met Tucker in prison, he looked alarmingly frail. His facial muscles seemed slack, and his hands trembled. Since his incarceration, he had had several strokes, and a cardiologist concluded that blood clots were gradually cutting off oxygen to his brain. His daughter told me bluntly, "He'll die in prison."

"Everyone says I'm smart," Tucker

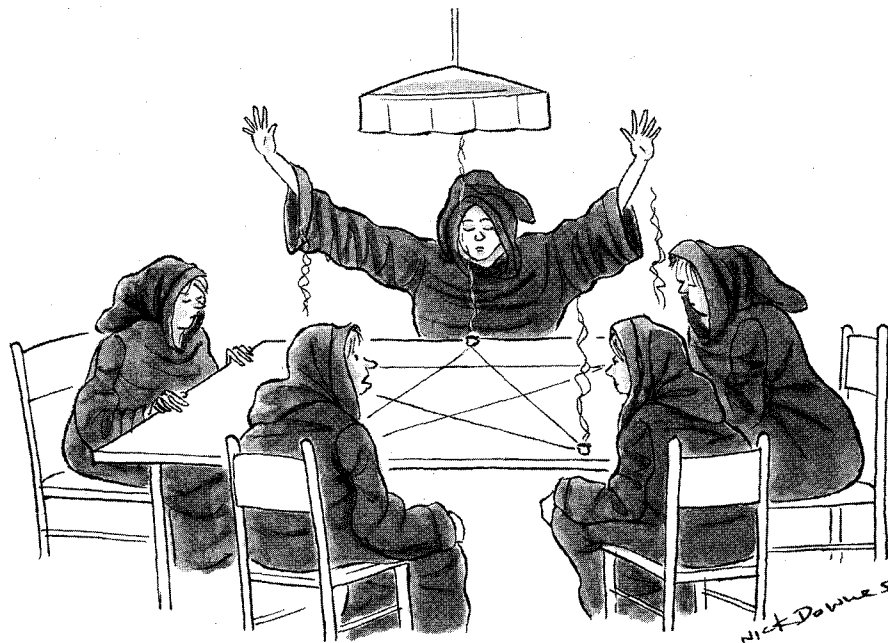
said to me. "But I'm not smart in the ways of life or I wouldn't have done the things I did." After a brief flurry of attention following his arrest, he had been all but forgotten. "When I die, no one will remember me," he said. His voice was almost a whisper. "I wish I had a real profession, something like the music business. I regret not being able to work steady and support my family. I have other regrets, too, but that's as much as one man can stand. Late at night, you lie in your bunk in prison and you think about what you lost, what you were, what you could've been, and you regret."

He said that his wife was thinking of selling their house and moving into a community where she could see more people. Although he and his wife still spoke regularly, Tucker said, she was too frail to visit.

"What hurts most . . . is that I know how much I disappointed my wife," he went on. "That hurts more than anything."

As he rose to go, he took a piece of paper from his back pocket. "I made this up for you last night," he said.

On it was a list of all his escapes, neatly printed. At the bottom, there was a No. 19—one more than he had actually made—left blank. As the guard fetched his wheelchair, he waved him away. "I don't need my chariot," he said. Then slowly, with his back hunched, he steadied himself against the wall and, with the guard standing behind him, inched down the corridor. ♦

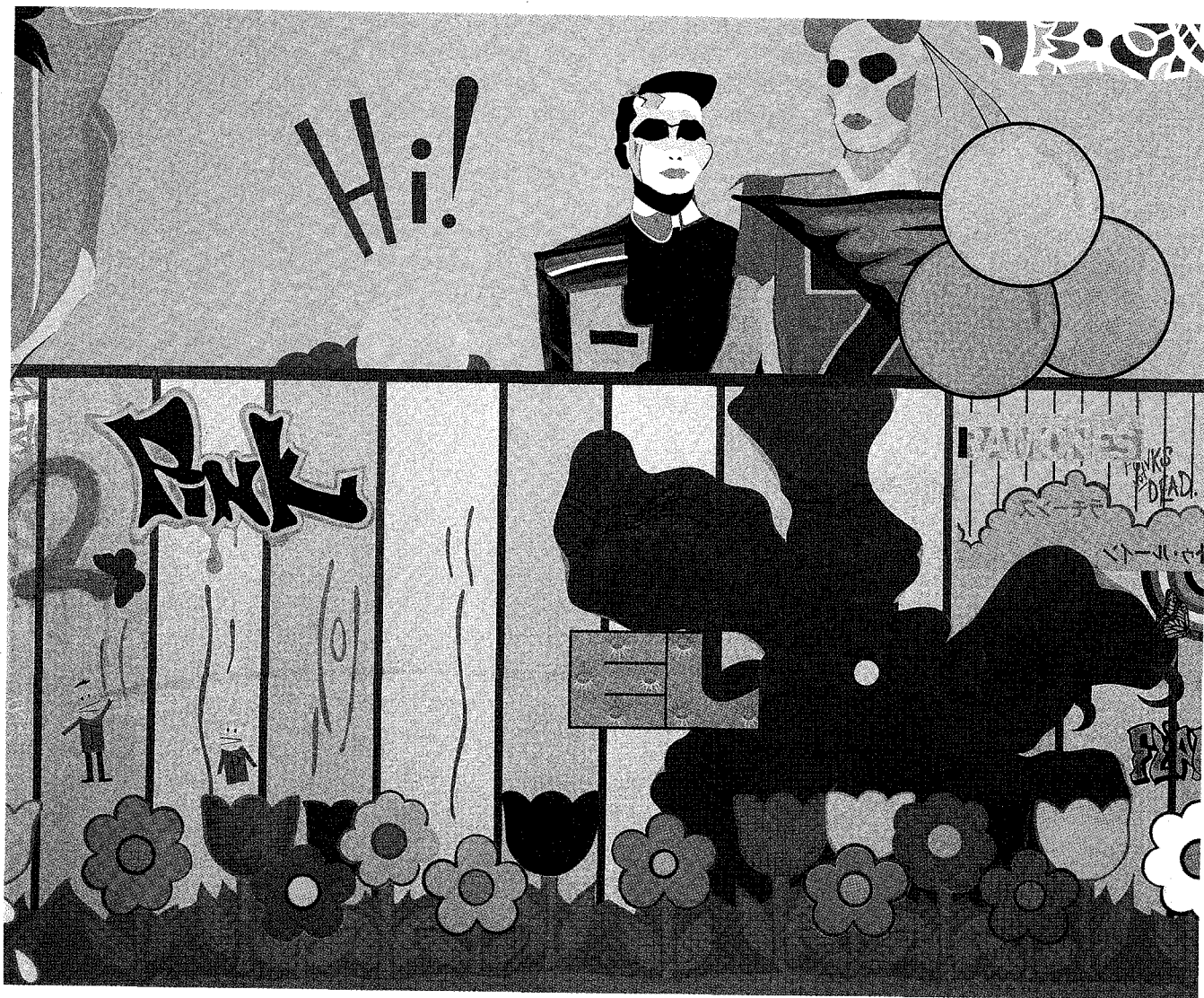


"Somewhere along the line, our sewing circle took a strange turn."

FICTION

JON

BY GEORGE SAUNDERS



Back in the time of which I am speaking, due to our Coördinators had mandated us, we had all seen that educational video of "It's Yours to Do With What You Like!" in which teens like ourselves speak on the healthy benefits of getting off by oneself and doing what one feels like in terms of self-touching, which what we learned from that video was, there is nothing wrong with self-touching, because love is a mystery but the mechanics of love need not be, so go off alone, see what is up, with you and your relation to your own gonads,

and the main thing is, just have fun, feeling no shame!

And then nightfall would fall and our facility would fill with the sounds of quiet fast breathing from inside our Privacy Tarps as we all experimented per the techniques taught us in "It's Yours to Do With What You Like!" and what do you suspect, you had better make sure that that little gap between the main wall and the sliding wall that slides out to make your Gender Areas is like really really small. Which guess what, it wasn't.

That is all what I am saying.

Also all what I am saying is, who could blame Josh for noting that gap and squeezing through it snakelike in just his Old Navy boxers that Old Navy gave us to wear for gratis, plus who could blame Ruthie for leaving her Velcro knowingly un-Velcroed? Which soon all the rest of us heard them doing what the rest of us so badly wanted to be doing, only we, being more mindful of the rules than them, just laid there doing the self-stuff from the video, listening to Ruth and Josh really doing it for real, which believe me, even that was pretty fun.

"Hi!" (DETAIL) MICHAEL BEVILACQUA/DEITCH PROJECTS

And when Josh came back next morning so happy he was crying, that was a further blow to our morality, because why did our Coördinators not catch him on their supposedly nighttime monitors? In all of our hearts was the thought of, O.K., we thought you said no boy-and-girl stuff, and yet here is Josh, with his Old Navy boxers and a hickey on his waist, and none of you guys is even saying boo?

Because I for one wanted to do right, I did not want to sneak through that gap, I wanted to wed someone when old enough (I will soon tell who) and relocate to the appropriate facility in terms of demographics, namely Young Marrieds, such as Scranton, PA, or Mobile, AL, and then along comes Josh doing Ruthie with imperity, and no one is punished, and soon the miracle of birth results and all our Coördinators, even Mr. Delacourt, are bringing Baby Amber stuffed animals? At which point every cell or chromosome or whatever it was in my gonads that had been holding their breaths was suddenly like, Dude, slide through that gap no matter how bad it hurts, squat outside Carolyn's Privacy Tarp whispering, Carolyn, it's me, please un-Velcro your Privacy opening!

Then came the final straw that broke the back of my saying no to my gonads, which was I dreamed I was that black dude on MTV's "Hot and Spicy Christmas" (around like Location Indicator 34412, if you want to check it out) and Carolyn was the oiled-up white chick, and we were trying to earn the Island Vacation by miming through the ten Hot 'n' Nasty Positions before the end of "We Three Kings," only then, sadly, during Her on Top, Thumb in Mouth, her Elf Cap fell off, and as the Loser Buzzer sounded she bent low to me, saying, Oh, Jon, I wish we did not have to do this for fake in front of hundreds of kids on Spring Break doing the wave but instead could do it for real with just each other in private.

And then she kissed me with a kiss I can only describe as melting.

So imagine that is you, you are a healthy young dude who has been self-practicing all those months, and you wake from that dream of a hot chick giving you a melting kiss, and that same hot chick is laying or lying just on the other side of the sliding wall, and mean-

while in the very next Privacy Tarp is that sleeping dude Josh, who a few weeks before a baby was born to the girl he had recently did it with, and nothing bad happened to them, except now Mr. Slippen sometimes let them sleep in.

What would you do?

Well, you would do what I did, you would slip through, and when Carolyn un-Velcroed that Velcro wearing her blue Guess kimono, whispering, Oh my God, I thought you'd never ask, that would be the most romantic thing you had ever underwent.

And though I had many times seen LI 34321 for Honey Grahams, where the stream of milk and the stream of honey enjoin to make that river of sweet-tasting goodness, I did not know that, upon making love, one person may become like the milk and the other like the honey, and soon they cannot even remember who started out the milk and who the honey, they just become one fluid, this like honey/milk combo.

Well, that is what happened to us.

Which is why soon I had to go to Mr. Slippen hat in hand and say, Sir, Baby Amber will be having a little playmate if that is O.K. with you, to which he just rolled his eyes and crushed the plastic cup in his hand and threw it at my chest, saying, What are we running in here, Randy, a freaking play school?

Then he said, Well, Christ, what am I supposed to do, lose two valuable team members because of this silliness? All right all right, how soon will Baby Amber be out of that crib or do I have to order your kid a whole new one?

Which I was so happy, because soon I would be a father and would not even lose my job.

A few days later, like how it was with Ruthie and Josh, Mr. Delacourt's brother the minister came in and married us, and afterward barbecue beef was catered, and we danced at our window while outside pink and purple balloons were released, and all the other kids were like, Rock on, you guys, have a nice baby and all!

It was the best day of our lives thus far for sure.

But I guess it is true what they say at LI 11006 about life throwing us not only curves and sliders but sometimes even worse, as Dodger pitcher Hector Jones throws from behind his back a grand

piano for Allstate, because soon here came that incident with Baby Amber, which made everybody just loony.

Which that incident was, Baby Amber died.

Sometimes it was just nice and gave one a fresh springtime feeling to sit in the much coveted window seat, finalizing one's Summary while gazing out at our foliage strip, which sometimes slinking through it would be a cat from Rustic Village Apartments, looking so cute that one wished to pet or even smell it, with wishful petting being the feeling I was undergoing on the sad day of which I am telling, such as even giving the cat a tuna chunk and a sip of my Diet Coke! If cats even like soda. That I do not know.

And then Baby Amber toddled by, making this funny noise in her throat of not being very happy, and upon reaching the Snack Cart she like seized up and tumped over, giving off this sort of shriek.

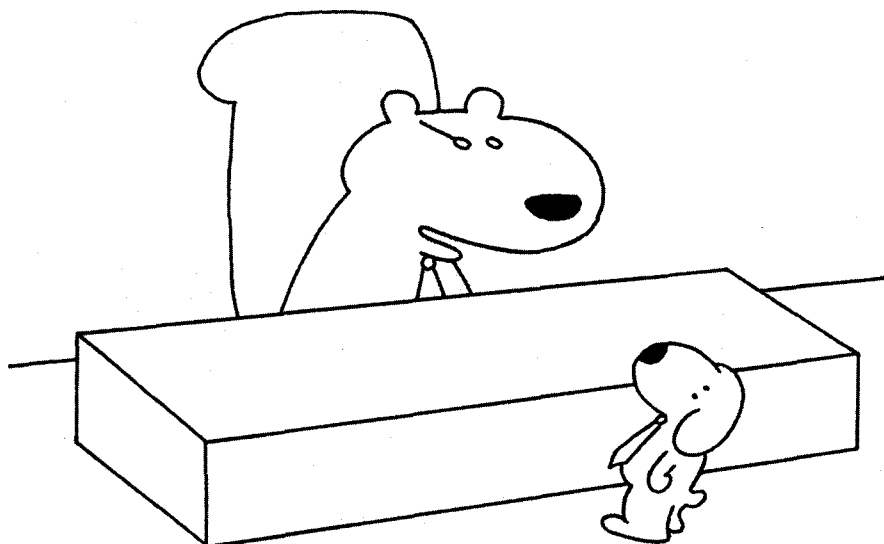
At first we all just looked at her, like going, Baby Amber, if that is some sort of new game, we do not exactly get it, plus come on, we have a lot of Assessments to get through this morning, such as a First-Taste Session for Diet Ginger-Coke, plus a very critical First View of Dean Witter's Preliminary Clip Reel for their campaign of "Whose Ass Are You Kicking Today?"

But then she did not get up.

We dropped our Summaries and raced to the Observation Window and began pounding, due to we loved her so much, her being the first baby we had ever witnessed living day after day, and soon the paramedics came and took her away, with one of them saying, Jesus, how stupid are you kids, anyway, this baby is burning up, she is like 107 with meningitis.

So next morning there was Carolyn all freaked out with her little baby belly, watching Amber's crib being dismantled by Physical Plant, who wiped all facility surfaces with Handi Wipes in case the meningitis was viral, and there was the rest of us, just like thrashing around the place kicking things down, going like, This sucks, this is totally fucked up!

Looking back, I commend Mr. Slippen for what he did next, which was he



Cravutti

"The old tricks, young fellow, have served me well."

said, Christ, folks, all our hearts are broken, it is not just yours, do you or do you not think I have Observed this baby from the time she was born, do you or do you not think that I, too, feel like kicking things down while shouting, This sucks, this is totally fucked up? Only what would that accomplish, would that bring Baby Amber back? I am at a loss, in terms of how can we best support Ruth and Josh in this sad tragic time, is it via feeling blue and cranky, or via feeling refreshed and hopeful and thus better able to respond to their needs?

So that was a non-brainer, and we all voted to accept Mr. Slippen's Facility Morale Initiative, and soon were getting our Aurabon® twice a day instead of once, plus it seemed like better stuff, and I for one had never felt so glad or stress-free, and my Assessments became very nuanced, and I spent many hours doing and enjoying them and then redoing and reënjoying them, and it was during this period that we won the McDorland Prize for Excellence in Assessing in the Midwest Region in our demographic category of White Teens.

The only one who failed to become gladder was Carolyn, who due to her condition of pregnant could not join us at the place in the wall where we hooked in for our Aurabon®. And now whenever the rest of us hooked in she

would come over and say such negative things as, Wake up and smell the coffee, you feel bad because a baby died, how about honoring that by continuing to feel bad, which is only natural, because a goddam baby died, you guys?

At night in our shared double Privacy Tarp in Conference Room 11, which our Coördinators had gave us so we would feel more married, I would be like, Honey, look, your attitude only sucks because you can't hook in, once baby comes all will be fine, due to you'll be able to hook in again, right? But she always blew me off, like she would say she was thinking of never hooking in again and why was I always pushing her to hook in and she just didn't know who to trust anymore, and one night when the baby kicked she said to her abdomen, Don't worry, angel, Mommy is going to get you Out.

Which my feeling was: Out? Hello? My feeling was: Hold on, I like what I have achieved, and when I thought of descending Out to somewhere with no hope of meeting luminaries such as actress Lily Farrell-Garesh or Mark Belay, chairperson of Thatscool.com, descending Out to, say, some lumberyard like at LI 77656 for Midol, merely piling lumber as cars rushed past, cars with no luminaries inside, only plain regular people who did not know me from Adam, who, upon seeing me, saw just some mere guy stacking lumber having such hum-

drum thoughts as thinking, Hey, I wonder what's for lunch, duh—I got a cold flat feeling in my gut, because I did not want to undergo it.

Plus furthermore (and I said this to Carolyn) what will it be like for us when all has been taken from us? Of what will we speak of? I do not want to only speak of my love in grunts! If I wish to compare my love to a love I have previous knowledge of, I do not want to stand there in the wind casting about for my metaphor! If I want to say like, Carolyn, remember that RE/MAX one where as the redhead kid falls asleep holding that Teddy bear rescued from the trash, the bear comes alive and winks, and the announcer goes, Home is the place where you find yourself suddenly no longer longing for home (LI 34451)—if I want to say to Carolyn, Carolyn, LI 34451, check it out, that is how I feel about you—well, then, I want to say it! I want to possess all the articulate I can, because otherwise there we will be, in non-designer clothes, no longer even on Trend-Setters & TasteMakers gum cards with our photos on them, and I will turn to her and say, Honey, uh, honey, there is a certain feeling but I cannot name it and cannot cite a precedent-type feeling, but trust me, dearest, wow, do I ever feel it for you, right now. And what will that be like, that stupid standing there, just a man and a woman and the wind, and nobody knowing what nobody is meaning?

Just then the baby kicked my hand, which at that time was on Carolyn's stomach.

And Carolyn was like, You are either with me or agin me.

Which was so funny, because she was proving my point! Because you are either with me or agin me is what the Lysol bottle at LI 12009 says to the scrubbing sponge as they approach the grease stain together, which is making at them a threatening fist while wearing a sort of Mexican bandolera!

When I pointed this out, she removed my hand from her belly.

I love you, I said.

Prove it, she said.

So next day Carolyn and I came up to Mr. Slippen and said, Please, Mr. Slippen, we hereby Request that you supply us with the appropriate Exit Paperwork.

To which Mr. Slippen said, Guys, folks, tell me this is a joke by you on me.

And Carolyn said softly, because she had always liked Mr. Slippen, who had taught her to ride a bike when small in the Fitness Area, It's no joke.

And Slippen said, Holy smokes, you guys are possessed of the fruits of the labors of hundreds of thousands of talented passionate men and women, some of whom are now gone from us, they poured forth these visions in the prime of their lives, reacting spontaneously to the beauty and energy of the world around them, which is why these stories and images are such an unforgettable testimony to who we are as a nation! And you have it all within you! I can only imagine how thrilling that must be. And now, to give it all up? For what? Carolyn, for what?

And Carolyn said, Mr. Slippen, I did not see you raising your babies in such a confined environment.

And Slippen said, Carolyn, that is so, but also please note that neither I nor my kids have ever been on TrendSetters & TasteMakers gum cards and believe me, I have heard a few earfuls vis-à-vis that, as in: Dad, you could've got us In but no, and now, Dad, I am merely another ophthalmologist among millions of ophthalmologists. And please do not think that is not something that a father sometimes struggles with. In terms of coulda shoulda woulda.

And Carolyn said, Jon, you know what, he is not even really listening to us.

And Slippen said, Randy, since when is your name Jon?

Because by the way my name is really Jon. Randy is just what my mother put on the form the day I was Accepted, although tell the truth I do not know why.

It is one thing to see all this stuff in your head, Carolyn said. But altogether different to be out in it, I would expect.

And I could see that she was softening into a like daughter role, as if wanting him to tell her what to do, and up came LI 27493 (Prudential Life), where, with Dad en-

stroked in the hospital bed, Daughter asks should she marry the guy who though poor has a good heart, and we see the guy working with inner-city kids via spray-painting a swing set, and Dad says, Sweetie, the heart must lead you. And then later here is Dad all better in a tux, and Daughter hugging the poor but good dude while sneaking a wink at Dad, who raises his glass and points at the groom's shoe, where there is this little smudge of swing-set paint.

I cannot comment as to that, Slippen said. Everyone is different. Nobody can know someone else's experiences.

Larry, no offense but you are talking shit, Carolyn said. We deserve better than that from you.

And Slippen looked to be softening, and I remembered when he would sneak all of us kids in doughnuts, doughnuts we did not even need to Assess but could simply eat with joy with jelly on our face before returning to our Focussed Purposeful Play with toys we would Assess by coloring in on a sheet of paper either a smiling duck if the toy was fun or a scowling duck if the toy bit.

And Slippen said, Look, Carolyn, you are two very fortunate people, even chosen people. A huge investment was made in you, which I would argue you

have a certain responsibility to repay, not to mention, with a baby on the way, there is the question of security, security for your future that I—

Uncle, please, Carolyn said, which was her trumpet cart, because when she was small he had let her call him that and now she sometimes still did when the moment was right, such as at Christmas Eve when all of our feelings was high.

Jesus, Slippen said. Look, you two can do what you want, clearly. I cannot stop you kids, but, golly, I wish I could. All that is required is the required pre-Exit visit to the Lerner Center, which as you know you must take before I can give you the necessary Exit Paperwork. When would you like to take or make that visit?

Now, Carolyn said.

Gosh, Carolyn, when did you become such a pistol? Mr. Slippen said, and called for the minivan.

The Lerner Center, even when reached via a blackened-window minivan, is a trip that will really blow one's mind, due to all the new sights and sounds one experiences, such as carpet on floor is different from carpet on facility floor, such as smoke smell from the minivan ashtrays, whereas we are a No Smok-



"The damsel-in-distress thing is just one of several income streams that I pursue."

Discontinued Sympathy Cards



R. Clu

ing facility, not to mention, wow, when we were led in blindfolded for our own protection, so many new smells shot forth from these like sidewalkside blooms or whatever that Carolyn and I were literally bumping into each other like swooning.

Inside they took our blindfolds off, and, yes, it looked and smelled exactly like our facility, and like every facility across the land, via the PervaScent® system, except in other facilities across the land a lady in blue scrubs does not come up to you with crossed eyes, sloshing around a cup of lemonade, saying in this drunk voice like, A barn is more than a barn it is a memory of a time when you were cared for by a national chain of caregivers who bring you the best of life with a selfless evening in

Monterey when the stars are low you can be thankful to your Amorino Co broker!

And then she burst into tears and held her lemonade so crooked it was like spilling on the Foosball table. I had no idea what Location Indicator or Indicators she was even at, and when I asked, she didn't seem to even know what I meant by Location Indicator, and was like, Oh, I just don't know anymore what is going on with me or why I would expose that tenderest part of my baby to the roughest part of the forest where the going gets rough, which is not the accomplishment of any one man but an entire team of dreamers who dream the same dreams you dream in the best interests of that most important system of all, your family!

Then this Lerner Center dude came over and led her away, and she slammed her hand down so hard on the Foosball table that the little goalie cracked and his head flew over by us, and someone said, Good one, Doreen. Now there's no Foosball.

At which time luckily it was time for our Individual Consultation.

Who we got was this Mid-Ager from Akron, OH, who, when I asked my first question off of my Question Card they gave us, which was, What is it like in terms of pain, he said, There is no pain except once I poked myself in my hole with a coffee stirrer and, Jesus, that smarted, but otherwise you can't really even feel it.

So I was glad to hear it, although not so glad when he showed us where he had poked his hole with the stirrer, because I am famous as a wimp among my peers in terms of gore, and he had opted not to use any DermaFill®, and you could see right in. And, wow, there is something about observing up close a raw bloody hole at the base of somebody's hair that really gets one thinking. And though he said, in Question No. 2, that his hole did not present him any special challenges in terms of daily maintenance, looking into that hole, I was like, Dude, how does that give you no challenges, it is like somebody blew off a firecracker inside your freaking neck!

And when Carolyn said Question No. 3, which was, How do you now find your thought processes, his brow darkened and he said, Well, to be frank, though quite advanced, having been here three years, there are, if you will, places where things used to be when I went looking for them, brainwise, but now, when I go there, nothing is there, it is like I have the shelving but not the cans of corn, if you get my drift. For example, looking at you, young lady, I know enough to say you are pretty, but when I direct my brain to a certain place, to find there a more vivid way of saying you are pretty, watch this, some words will come out, which I, please excuse me, oh dammit—

Then his voice changed to this announcer voice and he was like, These women know that for many generations entrenched deep in this ancient forest is a secret known by coffeegrowers since

the dawn of time man has wanted one thing which is to watch golf in peace will surely follow once knowledge is dispersed and the World Book is a super bridge across the many miles the phone card can close the gap!

And his eyes were crossing and he was sputtering, which would have been funny if we did not know that soon our eyes would be the crossing eyes and out of our mouths would the sputter be flying.

Then he got up and fled from the room, hitting himself hard in the face.

And I said to Carolyn, Well, that about does it for me.

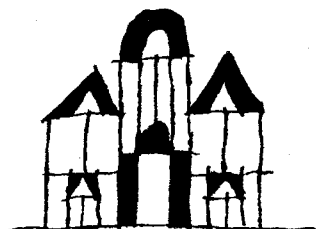
And I waited for her to say that about did it for her, but she only sat there looking conflicted with her hand on her belly.

Out in the Common Room, I took her in my arms and said, Honey, I do not really think we have it all that bad, why not just go home and love each other and our baby when he or she comes, and make the best of all the blessings what we have been given?

And her head was tilted down in this way that seemed to be saying, Yes, sweetie, my God, you were right all along.

But then a bad decisive thing happened, which was this old lady came hobbling over and said, Dear, you must wait until Year Two to truly know, some do not thrive but others do, I am Year Two, and do you know what? When I see a bug now, I truly see a bug, when I see a paint chip I am truly seeing that paint chip, there is no distraction and it is so sweet, nothing in one's field of vision but what one opts to put there via moving one's eyes, and also do you hear how well I am speaking?

Out in the minivan I said, Well I am decided, and Carolyn said, Well I am too. And then there was this long dead silence, because I knew and she knew that what we had both decided was not the same decision, not at all, that old crony had somehow rung her bell!



And I said, How do you know what she said is even true?

And she said, I just know.

That night in our double Privacy Tarp, Carolyn nudged me awake and said, Jon, doesn't it make sense to make our mistakes in the direction of giving our kid the best possible chance at a beautiful life?

And I was like, Chick, please take a look in the Fridge, where there is every type of food that must be kept cold, take a look on top of the Fridge, where there is every type of snack, take a look in our Group Closet, which is packed with gratis designerwear such as Baby Gap and even Baby Ann Taylor, whereas what kind of beautiful life are you proposing with a Fridge that is empty both inside and on top, and the three of us going around all sloppently, because I don't know about you but my skill set is pretty limited in terms of what do I know how to do, and if you go into the Fashion Module for Baby Ann Taylor and click with your blinking eyes on Pricing Info you will find that they are not just giving that shit away.

And she said, Oh, Jon, you break my heart, that night when you came to my Tarp you were like a lion taking what he wanted but now you are like some bunny wiffing his nose in fright.

Well, that wasn't nice, and I told her that wasn't nice, and she said, Jesus, don't whine, you are whining like a bunny, and I said I would rather be a bunny than a rag, and she said maybe I better go sleep somewhere else.

So I went out to Boys and slept on the floor, it being too late to check out a Privacy Tarp.

And I was pissed and sad, because no dude likes to think of himself as a rabbit, because once your girl thinks of you as a rabbit, how will she ever again think of you as a lion? And all of the sudden I felt very much like starting over with someone who would always think of me as a lion and never as a rabbit, and who really got it about how lucky we were.

Laying there in Boys, I did what I always did when confused, which was call up my Memory Loop of my mom, where she is baking a pie with her red hair up in a bun, and as always she paused in her rolling and said, Oh, my little man, I love you so much, which

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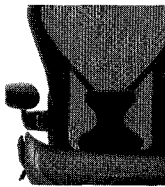
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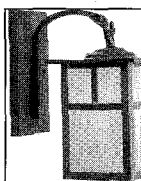
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is why I did the most difficult thing of all, which was part with you, my darling, so that you could use your exceptional intelligence to do that most holy of things, help other people. Stay where you are, do not get distracted, have a content and productive life, and I will be happy too.

Blinking on End, I was like, Thanks, Mom, you have always been there for me, I really wish I could have met you in person before you died.

In the morning Slippen woke me by giving me the light shock on the foot bottom which was sometimes useful to help us arise if we had to arise early and were in need of assistance, and said to please accompany him, as we had a bit of a sticky wicket in our purview.

Waiting in Conference Room 6 were Mr. Dove and Mr. Andrews and Mr. Delacourt himself, and at the end of the table Carolyn, looking small, with both hands on her pile of Exit Paperwork and her hair in braids, which I had always found cute, her being like that milkmaid for Swiss Rain Chocolate (LI 10003), who suddenly throws away her pail and grows sexy via taking out her braids, and as some fat farm ladies line up by a silo and also take out their braids to look sexy, their thin husbands look dubious and run for the forest.

Randy, Mr. Dove said, Carolyn here has evinced a desire to Exit. What we would like to know is, being married, do you have that same desire?

And I looked at Carolyn like, You are jumping to some conclusion because of one little fight, when it was you who called me the rabbit first, which is the only reason I called you rag?

It's not because of last night, Jon, Carolyn said.

Randy, I sense some doubt? Mr. Dove said.

And I had to admit that some doubt was being felt by me, because it seemed more than ever like she was some sort of malcontentish girl who would never be happy, no matter how good things were.

Maybe you kids would like some additional time, Mr. Andrews said. Some time to talk it over and be really sure.

I don't need any additional time, Carolyn said.

And I said, You're going no matter what? No matter what I do?

And she said, Jon, I want you to come with me so bad, but, yes, I'm going.

And Mr. Dove said, Wait a minute, who is Jon?

And Mr. Andrews said, Randy is Jon, it is apparently some sort of pet name between them.

And Slippen said to us, Look, guys, I have been married for nearly thirty years and it has been my experience that, when in doubt, take a breath. Err on the side of being together. Maybe, Carolyn, the thing to do is, I mean, your Paperwork is complete, we will hold on to it, and maybe Randy, as a concession to Carolyn, you could complete your Paperwork, and we'll hold on to it for you, and when you both decide the time is right, all you have to do is say the word and we will—

I'm going today, Carolyn said. As soon as possible.

And Mr. Dove looked at me and said, Jon, Randy, whoever, are you prepared to go today?

And I said no. Because what is her rush, I was feeling, why is she looking so frantic with furrowed anxious brow like that Claymation chicken at LI 98473, who says the sky is falling the sky is falling and turns out it is only a Dodge Ramcharger, which crushes her from on high and one arm of hers or wing sticks out with a sign that says March Madness Daze?

And Slippen said, Guys, guys, I find this a great pity. You are terrific together. A real love match.

Carolyn was crying now and said, I am so sorry, but if I wait I might change my mind, which I know in my heart would be wrong.

And she thrust her Exit Paperwork across at Mr. Slippen.

Then Dove and Andrews and Delacourt began moving with great speed, as if working directly from some sort of corporate manual, which actually they were, Mr. Dove had some photocopied sheets, and, reading from the sheets, he asked was there anyone with whom she wished to have a fond last private conversation, and she said, Well, duh, and we were both left briefly alone.

She took a deep breath while looking at me all tender and said, Oh Gadzooks. Which that broke my heart, Gadzooks being what we sometimes said at nice privacy moments in our Privacy Tarp

when overwhelmed by our good luck in terms of our respective bodies looking so hot and appropriate, Gadzooks being from LI 38492 for Zookers Gum, where the guy blows a bubble so Zookified that it ingests a whole city and the city goes floating up to Mars.

At this point her tears were streaming down and mine also, because up until then I thought we had been so happy.

Jon, please, she said.

I just can't, I said.

And that was true.

So we sat there quiet with her hands against my hands like Colonel Sanders and wife at LI 87345, where he is in jail for refusing to give up the recipe for KFC Haitian MiniBreasts, and then Carolyn said, I didn't mean that thing about the rabbit, and I scrinkled up my nose rabbitlike to make her laugh.

But apparently in the corporate manual there is a time limit on fond last private conversations, because in came Kyle and Blake from Security, and Carolyn kissed me hard, like trying to memorize my mouth, and whispered, Someday come find us.

Then they took her away, or she took them away rather, because she was so far in front they had to like run to keep up as she clomped loudly away in her Kenneth Cole boots, which by the way they did not let her keep those, because that night, selecting my pajamas, I found them back in the Group Closet.

Night after night after that I would lay or lie alone in our Privacy Tarp, which now held only her nail clippers and her former stuffed dog Lefty, and during the days Slippen let me spend many unbillable hours in the much coveted window seat, just scanning some images or multiscanning some images, and around me would be the other facility Boys and Girls, all Assessing, all smiling, because we were still on the twice-a-day Aurabon®, and thinking of Carolyn in those blue scrubs, alone in the Lerner Center, I would apply for some additional Aurabon® via filling out a Work-Affecting Mood-Problem Notification, which Slippen would always approve, because he felt so bad for me.

And the Aurabon® would make things better, as Aurabon® always makes things better, although soon what I found was, when you are hooking in like

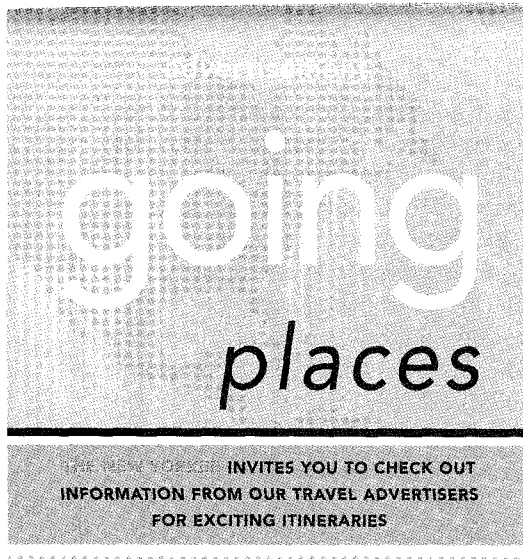
eight or nine times a day, you are always so happy, and yet it is a kind of happy like chewing on tinfoil, and once you are living for that sort of happy, you soon cannot be happy enough, even when you are very very happy and are even near tears due to the beauty of the round metal hooks used to hang your facility curtains, you feel this intense wish to be even happier, so you tear yourself away from the beautiful curtain hooks, and with shaking happy hands fill out another Work-Affecting Mood-Problem Notification, and then, because nothing in your facility is beautiful enough to look at with your new level of happiness, you sit in the much coveted window seat and start lendelling in this crazy uncontrolled way, calling up, say, the Nike one with the Hanging Gardens of Babylon (LI 89736), and though it is beautiful, it is not beautiful enough, so you scatter around some Delicate Secrets lingerie models from LI 22314, and hang fat Dole oranges and bananas in the trees (LI 76765), and add like a sky full of bright stars from LI 74638 for Crest, and from the Smell Palate supplied by the anti-allergen Capaviv® you fill the air with jasmine and myrrh, but still that is not beautiful enough, so you blink

on End and fill out another Work-Affecting Mood-Problem Notification, until finally one day Mr. Dove comes over and says, Randy, Jon, whatever you are calling yourself these days—a couple of items. First, it seems to us that you are in some private space not helpful to you, and so we are cutting back your Aurabon® to twice a day like the other folks, and please do not sit in that window seat anymore, it is hereby forbidden to you, and plus we are going to put you on some additional Project Teams, since it is our view that idle hands are the devil's work area. Also, since you are only one person, it is not fair, we feel, for you to have a whole double Privacy Tarp to yourself, you must, it seems to us, rejoin your fellow Boys in Boys.

So that night I went back with Rudy and Lance and Jason and the others, and they were nice, as they are always nice, and via No. 10 cable Jason shared with me some Still Photos from last year's Christmas party, of Carolyn hugging me from behind with her cute face appearing beneath my armpit, which made me remember how after the party in our Privacy Tarp we played a certain game, which it is none of your beeswax who I was in that game and who she was,



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only, believe me, that was a memorable night, with us watching the snow fall from the much coveted window seat, in which we sat snuggling around midnight, when we had left our Tarp to take a break for air, and also we were both sort of sore.

Which made it all that much more messed up and sad to be sleeping once again alone in Boys.

When the sliding wall came out to make our Gender Areas, I noticed that they had fixed it so nobody could slide through anymore, via five metal rods. All we could do was, by putting our mouths to the former gap, say good night to the Girls, who all said good night back from their respective Privacy Tarps in this sort of muffled way.

But I did not do that, as I had nobody over there I wished to say good night to, they all being like merely sisters to me, and that was all.

So that was the saddest time of my life thus far for sure.

Then one day we were all laying or lying on our stomachs playing Hungarian Headchopper for GameBoy, a new proposed one where you are this dude with a scythe in your mother's garden, only what your mother grows is heads, when suddenly a shadow was cast over my game by Mr. Slippen, which freaked up my display, and I harvested three unripe heads, but the reason Mr. Slippen was casting his shadow was, he had got a letter for me from Carolyn!

And I was so nervous opening it, and even more nervous after opening it, because inside were these weird like marks I could not read, like someone had hooked a pen to the back leg of a bird and said, Run, little bird, run around this page and I will mail it for you. And the parts I could read were bumming me out even worse, such as she had wrote all sloppently, Jon a abbot is a cove, a glen, it is something with prayerful guys all the livelong day in silence as they move around they are sure of one thing which is the long-term stability of a product we not only stand behind we run behind since what is wrong with taking a chance even if that chance has horns and hoofs and it is just you and your worst fear in front of ten thousand screaming supporters of your last chance to be the very best you can be?

And then thank God it started again looking like the pen on the foot of the running bird.

I thought of how hot and smart she had looked when doing a crossword with sunglasses on her head in Hilfiger cutoffs, I thought of her that first night in her Privacy Tarp, naked except for her La Perla panties in the light that came from the Exit sign through the thin blue Privacy Tarp, so her flat tummy and not-flat breasts and flirty smile were all blue, and then all of the sudden I felt like the biggest jerk in the world, because why had I let her go? It was like I was all of the sudden waking up! She was mine and I was hers, she was so thin and cute, and now she was at the Lerner Center all alone? Shaking and scared with a bloody hole in her neck and our baby in her belly, hanging out with all those other scared shaking people with bloody holes in their necks, only none of them knew her and loved her like I did? I had done such a dumb-shit thing to her, all the time thinking it was sound reasoning, because isn't that how it is with our heads, when we are in them it always makes sense, but then later, when you look back, we sometimes are like, I am acting like a total dumb-ass!

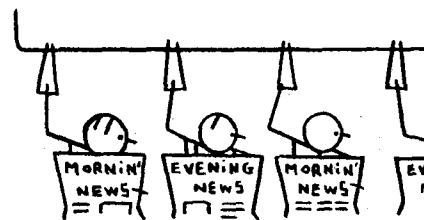
Then Brad came up and was like, Dude, time to hook in.

And I was like, Please, Brad, do not bother me with that shit at this time.

And I went to get Slippen, only he was at lunch, so I went to get Dove and said, Sir, I hereby Request my appropriate Exit Paperwork.

And he said, Randy, please, you're scaring me, don't act rash, have a look out the window.

I had a look, and tell the truth it did not look that good, such as the Rustic Village Apartments, out of which every morning these bummed-out-looking guys in the plainest non-designer clothes ever would trudge out and get in their junky cars. And was someone joyfully kissing them goodbye, like saying when you come home tonight you will get a big treat, which is me? No, the person



who should have been kissing them with joy was yelling, or smoking, or yelling while smoking, and when the dudes came home they would sit on their stoops with heads in hand, as if all day long at work someone had been pounding them with clubs on their heads, saying they were jerks.

Then Dove said, Randy, Randy, why would a talented young person like yourself wish to surrender his influence in the world and become just another lowing cattle in the crowd, don't you know how much people out there look up to you and depend on you?

And that was true. Because sometimes kids from Rustic Village would come over and stand in our lava rocks with our Tastemakers & Trendsetters gum cards upheld, pressing them to our window, and when we would wave to them or strike the pose we were posing on our gum cards, they would race back all happy to their crappy apartments, probably to tell their moms that they had seen the real actual us, which was probably like the high point of their weeks.

But still, when I thought of those bird-like markings of Carolyn's letter, I don't know, something just popped, I felt I was at a distinct tilt, and I blurted out, No, no, just please bring me the freaking Paperwork, I am Requesting, and I thought when I Requested you had to do it!

And Dove said sadly, We do, Randy, when you Request, we have to do it.

Dove called the other Coördinators over and said, Larry, your little pal has just Requested his Paperwork.

And Slippen said, I'll be damned.

What a waste, Delacourt said. This is one super kid.

One of our best, Andrews said.

Which was true, with me five times winning the Coöperative Spirit Award and once even the Denny O'Malley Prize, Denny O'Malley being this Assessor in Chicago, IL, struck down at age ten, who died with a smile on his face of leukemia.

Say what you will, it takes courage, Slippen said. Going after one's wife and all. Yes and no, Delacourt said. If you, Larry, fall off a roof, does it help me to go tumbling after you?

But I am not your wife, Slippen said. Your pregnant wife.

Wife or no, pregnant or no, Delacourt said. What we then have are two folks

not feeling so good in terms of that pavement rushing up. No one is helped. Two are crushed. In effect three are crushed.

Baby makes three, Andrews said.

Although anything is possible, Slippen said. You know, the two of them together, the three of them, maybe they could make a go of it—

Larry, whose side are you on? Dove said.

I am on all sides, Slippen said.

You see this thing from various perspectives, Andrews said.

Anyway, this is academic, Delacourt said. He has Requested his Paperwork and we must provide it.

His poor mother, Dove said. The sacrifices she made, and now this.

Oh, please, Slippen said. His mother.

Larry, sorry, did you say something? Dove said.

Which mother did he get? Slippen said.

Larry, please go to that Taste-and-Rate in Conference Room 6, Delacourt said. See how they are doing with those CheezWands.

Which mother did we give him? Slippen said. The redhead baking the pie? The blonde in the garden?

Larry, honestly, Dove said. Are you freaking out?

The brunette at prayer? Slippen said. Who, putting down her prayer book, says, Stay where you are, do not get distracted, have a content and productive life, and I will be happy too?

Larry has been working too hard, Andrews said.

Plus taking prescription pills not prescribed to him, Delacourt said.

I have just had it with all of this, Slippen said, and stomped off to the Observation Room.

Ha ha, that Larry! Dove said. He did not even know your mom, Randy.

Only we did, Andrews said.

Very nice lady, Delacourt said.

Made terrific pies, Dove said.

And I was like, Do you guys think I am that stupid, I know something is up, because how did Slippen know my mom was a redhead making a pie and how did he know her exact words she said to me on my private Memory Loop?

Then there was this long silence.

And Delacourt said, Randy, when you were a child, you thought as a child. Do you know that one?

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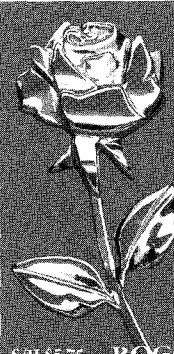


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"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen! If I may have just a moment of your time. My name is Edward, and I'll be sitting here reading the paper with my mouth shut. Thank you for your time, have a good evening, and God bless!"

And I did know that one, it being LI 88643 for Trojan Ribbed.

Well, you are not a child anymore, he said. You are a man. A man in the middle of making a huge mistake.

We had hoped it would not come to this, Dove said.

Please accompany us to the Facility Cinema, Delacourt said.

So I accompanied them to the Facility Cinema, which was a room off of Dining, with big-screen plasma TV and Pottery Barn leather couch and de-luxe Orville Redenbacher Corn Magician.

Up on the big-screen came this old-fashioned-looking film of a plain young girl with stringy hair, smoking a cigarette in a house that looked pretty bad.

And this guy unseen on the video said, O.K., tell us precisely why, in your own words.

And the girl said, Oh, I dunno, due to my relation with the dad, I got less than great baby interest?

O.K., the unseen voice said. And the money is not part?

Well, sure, yeah, I can always use money, she said.

But it is not the prime reason? the voice said. It being required that it not be the prime reason, but rather the prime reason might be, for example, your desire for a better life for your child?

O.K., she said.

Then they pulled back and you could see bashed-out windows with cardboard in them and the counters covered with dirty dishes and in the yard a car up on blocks.

And you have no objections to the terms and conditions? the voice said. Which you have read in their entirety?

It's all fine, the girl said.

Have you read it? the voice said.

I read in it, she said. O.K., O.K., I read it cover to freaking cover.

And the name change you have no objection to? the voice said.

O.K., she said. Although why Randy?

And the No-Visit Clause you also have no objection to? the voice said.

Fine, she said, and took a big drag.

Then Dove tapped on the wall twice and the movie Paused.

Do you know who that lady is, Randy? he said.

No, I said.

Do you know that lady is your mom? he said.

No, I said.

Well, that lady is your mom, Randy, he said. We are sorry you had to learn it in this manner.

And I was like, Very funny, that is not my mom, my mom is pretty, with red hair in a bun.

Randy, we admit it, Delacourt said. We gave some of you stylized mothers, in your Memory Loops, for your own good, not wanting you to feel bad about who your real mothers were. But in this time of crisis we must give you the straight skinny. That is your real mother, Randy, that is your real former house, that is where you would have been raised had your mother not answered our ad all those years ago, that is who you are. So much in us is hardwired! You cannot fight fate without some significant help from an intervening entity, such as us, such as our resources, which we have poured into you in good faith all these years. You

are a prince, we have made you a prince. Please do not descend back into the mud.

Reconsider, Randy, Dove said. Sleep on it.

Will you? Delacourt said. Will you at least sleep on it?

And I said I would.

Because tell the truth that thing with my mom had freaked me out, it was like my foundation had fallen away, like at LI 83743 for Advil, where the guy's foundation of his house falls away and he thunks his head on the floor of Hell and thus needs a Advil, which the Devil has some but won't give him any.

As he left, Dove unhit Pause, and I had time to note many things on that video, such as that lady's teeth were not good, such as my chin and hers were similar, such as she referred to our dog as Shit Machine, which what kind of name was that for a dog, such as at one point they zoomed in on this little baby sitting on the floor in just a diaper, all dirty and looking sort of dumb, and I could see very plain it was me.

Just before Dinner, Dove came back in.

Randy, your Paperwork, per your Request, he said. Do you still want it?

I don't know, I said. I'm not sure.

You are making me very happy, Dove said.

And he sent in Tony from Catering with this intense Dinner of steak au poivre and our usual cheese tray with Alsatian olives, and a milkshake in my monogrammed cup, and while I watched "Sunset Terror Home" on the big-screen, always a favorite, Bedtime passed and nobody came and got me, them letting me stay up as late as I wanted.

Later that night in my Privacy Tarp I was wakened by someone crawling in, and, hitting my Abercrombie & Fitch night-light, I saw it was Slippen.

Randy, I am so sorry for my part in all of this, he whispered. I just want to say you are a great kid and always have been since Day One and in truth I at times have felt you were more of a son than my own personal sons, and likewise with Carolyn, who was the daughter I never had.

I did not know what to say to that, it being so personal and all, plus he was like laying or lying practically right on top of me and I could smell wine on his breath. We had always learned in Religion that if something is making you uncomfortable you should just say it, so I just said it, I said, Sir, this is making me uncomfortable.

You know what is making me uncomfortable? he said. You lying here while poor Carolyn sits in the Lerner Center all alone, big as a house, scared to death. Randy, one only has one heart, and when that heart is breaking via thinking of what is in store for poor Carolyn, one can hardly be blamed for stepping in, can one? Can one? Randy, do you trust me?

He had always been good to me, having taught me so much, like how to hit a Wiffle and how to do a pushup, and once had even brought in this trough and taught me and Ed and Josh to fish, and how fun was that, all of us laughing and feeling around on the floor for the fish we kept dropping during those moments of involuntary blindness that would occur as various fish-related LIs flashed in our heads, like the talking whale for Stouffer's FishMeals (LI 38322), like the fish and loafs Jesus makes at LI 83722 and then that one dude goes, Lord, this bread is dry, can

you not summon up some ButterSub? I trust you, I said.

Then come on, he said, and crawled out of my Privacy Tarp.

We crossed the Common Area and went past Catering, which I had never been that far before, and soon were standing in front of this door labelled Caution Do Not Open Without Facility Personnel Accompaniment.

Randy, do you know what is behind this door? Slippen said.

No, I said.

Take a look, he said.

And smiling a smile like that mother on Christmas morning at LI 98732 for Madpets.com, who throws off the tablecloth to reveal a real horse in their living room chewing on the rug, Slippen threw open that door.

Looking out, I saw no walls and no rug and no ceiling, only lawn and flowers, and above that a wide black sky with stars, which all of that made me a little dizzy, there being no glass between me and it.

Then Slippen very gently pushed me out.

And I don't know, it is one thing to look out a window, but when you are Out, actually Out, that is something very powerful, and how embarrassing was that, because I could not help it, I went down flat on my gut, checking out those flowers, and the feeling of the one I chose was like the silk on that Hermès jacket I could never seem to get Reserved because Vance was always hogging it, except the flower was even better, it being very smooth and built in like layers? With the outside layer being yellow, and inside that a white thing like a bell, and inside the white bell-like thing were fifteen (I counted) smaller bell-like red things, and inside each red thing was an even smaller orange two-dingly-thing combo.

Which I was like, Dude, who thought this shit up? And though I knew very well from Religion it was God, still I had never thought so high of God as I did just then, seeing the kind of stuff He could do when He put His or Her mind to it.

Also amazing was, laying there on my gut, I was able to observe very slowly some grass, on a blade basis! And what I found was, each blade is its total own

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blade, they are not all exact copies as I had always thought when looking at the Rustic Village Apartment lawn from the much coveted window seat, no, each blade had a special design of up-and-down lines on it, plus some blades were wider than others, and some were yellow, with some even having little holes that I guessed had been put there via bugs chewing them?

By now as you know I am sometimes a kidder, with Humor always ranked by my peers as one of my Principal Positives on my Yearly Evaluation, but being totally serious? If I live one million years I will never forget all the beautiful things I saw and experienced in that kickass outside yard.

Isn't it something? Slippen said. But look, stand up, here is something even better.

And I stood up, and here came this bland person in blue scrubs, which my first thought was, Ouch, why not accentuate that killer bone structure with some makeup, and also what is up with that dull flat hair, did you never hear of Bumble & Bumble Plasma Volumizer?

And then she said my name.

Not my name of Randy but my real name of Jon.

Which is how I first got the shock of going, Oh my God, this poor washed-out gal is my Carolyn.

And wow was her belly bigger!

Then she touched my face very tender and said, The suspense of waiting is over and this year's Taurus far exceeds expectations already high in this humble farming community.

And I was like, Carolyn?

And she was like, The beauty of a reunion by the sea of this mother and son will not soon again be parted and all one can say is amen and open another bag of chips, which by spreading on a thin cream on the face strips away the harsh effect of the destructive years.

Then she hugged me, which is when I saw the gaping hole in her neck where her gargadisk had formerly been.

But tell the truth, even with DermaFilled® neckhole and nada makeup and huge baby belly, still she looked so pretty, it was like someone had put a light inside her and switched it on.

But I guess it is true what they say at LI 23005, life is full of ironic surprises, where that lady in a bikini puts on sun-

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The day folds up like money
if you're lucky. Mostly

sun a cold coin
drumming into the blue

of a guitar case. Close
up & head home.

Half-hundred times I wanted
to hock these six strings

or hack, if I could, my axe
into firewood. That blaze

never lasts.
I've begged myself hoarse

sung street corner
& subway over a train's blast

through stale air & trash.
You've seen me, brushed past—

my strings screech
& light up like a third rail—

Mornings, I am fed by flies,
strangers, sunrise.

—Kevin Young

screen and then there is this nuclear war and she takes a sip of her drink only she has been like burned to a crisp, because all that time Out not one LI had come up, as if my mind was stymied or holding its breath, but now all of the sudden here came all these LIs of Flowers, due to I had seen those real-life flowers, such as talking daisies for Polaroid (LI 101119), such as that kid who drops a jar of applesauce but his anal mom totally melts when he hands her a sunflower (LI 22365), such as the big word PFIZER that as you pan closer is made of roses (LI 88753), such as LI 73486, where as you fly over wildflowers to a Acura Legend on a cliff the announcer goes, Everyone is entitled to their own individual promised land.

And I blinked on Pause but it did not Pause, and blinked on End but it did not End.

Then up came LIs of Grass, due to I had seen that lawn, such as an old guy sprinkling grass seed while repetitively checking out his neighbor girl who is sunbathing, and then in spring he only has grass in that one spot (LI 11121), such as LI 76567, with a sweeping lawn leading up to a mansion for Grey Poupon, such as (LI 00391) these grass blades screaming in terror as this lawnmower approaches but then when they see it is a Toro they put on little party hats.

Randy, can you hear me? Slippen said. Do you see Carolyn? She has been waiting out here an hour. During that hour she has been going where she wants, looking at whatever she likes. See what she is doing now? Simply enjoying the night.

And that was true. Between flinches and blinks on End I could dimly persee

her sitting cross-legged near me, not flinching, not blinking, just looking pretty in the moonlight with a look on her face of deep concern for me.

Randy, this could all be yours, Slippen was saying. This world, this girl!

And then I must have passed out.

Because when I came to I was sitting inside that door marked Caution Do Not Open Without Facility Personnel Accompaniment, with my Paperwork in my lap and all my Coördinators standing around me.

Randy, Dove said. Larry Slippen here claims that you wish to Exit. Is this the case? Did you in fact Request your Paperwork, then thrust it at him?

O.K., I said. Yes.

So they rushed me to Removals, where this nurse Vivian was like, Welcome, please step behind that screen and strip off, then put these on.

Which I did, I dropped my Calvin Klein khakis and socks and removed my Country Road shirt as well as my Old Navy boxers, and put on the dreaded blue scrubs.

Best of luck, Randy, Slippen said, leaning in the door. You'll be fine.

Out out out, Vivian said.

Then she gave me this Patient Permission Form, which the first question was, Is patient aware of risk of significantly reduced postoperative brain function?

And I wrote, Yes.

And then it said, Does patient authorize Dr. Edward Kenton to perform all procedures associated with a complete gargadisk removal, including but not limited to e-wire severance, scar-tissue removal, forceful Kinney Maneuver (if necessary to fully disengage gargadisk), suturing, and postoperative cleansing using the Foreman Vacuum Device, should adequate cleaning not be achievable via traditional methods?

And I wrote, Yes.

I have been here since Wednesday, due to Dr. Kenton is at a wedding.

I want to thank Vivian for all this paper, and Mr. Slippen for being the father I never had, and Carolyn for not giving up on me, and Dr. Kenton, assuming he does not screw it up.

(Ha ha, you know, Dr. Kenton, I am just messing with you, even if you do screw it up, I know you tried your

best. Only please do not screw it up, ha ha ha!)

Last night they let Carolyn send me a fax from the Lerner Center, and it said, I may not look my best or be the smartest apple on the appcart but, believe me, in time I will again bake those ninety-two pies.

And I faxed back, However you are is fine with me, I will see you soon, look for me, I will be the one with the ripped-up neck, smacking himself in the head!

No matter what, she faxed, at least we will now have a life, that life dreamed of by so many, living in freedom with all joys and all fears, bring it on, I say, the balloon of our excitement will go up up up, to that land which is the land of true living, we will not be denied!

I love you, I wrote.

I love you too, she wrote.

Which I thought that was pretty good, it being so simple and all, and it gave me hope.

Because maybe we can do it.

Maybe we can come to be normal, and sit on our porch at night, the porch of our own house, like at LI 87326, where the mom knits and the dad plays guitar and the little kid works very industrious with his Speak & Spell, and when we talk, it will make total sense, and when we look at the stars and moon, if choosing to do that, we will not think of LI 44387, where the moon frowns down at this dude due to he is hiding in his barn eating Rebel CornBells instead of proclaiming his SnackLove aloud, we will not think of LI 09383, where this stork flies through some crying stars who are crying due to the baby who is getting born is the future Mountain Dew Guy, we will not think of that alien at LI 33081 descending from the sky going, Just what is this thing called a Cinnabon?

In terms of what we will think of, I do not know. When I think of what we will think of, I draw this like total blank and get scared, so scared my Peripheral Area flares up green, like when I have drank too much soda, but tell the truth I am curious, I think I am ready to try. ♦

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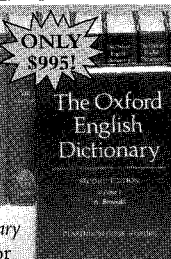
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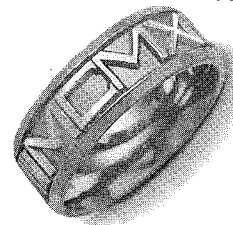


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A CRITIC AT LARGE

HONEST, DECENT, WRONG

The invention of George Orwell.

BY LOUIS MENAND

Animal Farm," George Orwell's satire, which became the Cold War "Candide," was finished in 1944, the high point of the Soviet-Western alliance against fascism. It was a warning against dealing with Stalin and, in the circumstances, a prescient book. Orwell had trouble finding a publisher, though, and by the time the book finally appeared, in August, 1945, the month of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, the Cold War was already on the horizon. "Animal Farm" was an instant success in England and the United States. It was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection; it was quickly translated into many languages and distributed, in some countries, by the United States government; and it made Orwell, who had spent most of his life scraping by, famous and rich. "1984," published four years later, had even greater success. Orwell was fatally ill with pulmonary tuberculosis when he wrote it, and he died in January, 1950. He was forty-six.

The revision began almost immediately. Frances Stonor Saunders, in her fascinating study "The Cultural Cold War," reports that right after Orwell's death the C.I.A. (Howard Hunt was the agent on the case) secretly bought the film rights to "Animal Farm" from his widow, Sonia, and had an animated-film version produced in England, which it distributed throughout the world. The book's final scene, in which the pigs (the Bolsheviks, in Orwell's allegory) can no longer be distinguished from the animals'

previous exploiters, the humans (the capitalists), was omitted. A new ending was provided, in which the animals storm the farmhouse where the pigs have moved and liberate themselves all over again. The great enemy of propaganda was subjected, after his death, to the deceptions and evasions of propaganda—and by the very people, American Cold Warriors, who would canonize him as the great enemy of propaganda.

Howard Hunt at least kept the story pegged to the history of the Soviet Union, which is what Orwell intended. Virtually every detail in "Animal Farm" allegorizes some incident in that history: the Kronstadt rebellion, the five-year plan, the Moscow trials, the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the Tehran conference. But although Orwell didn't want Communism, he didn't want capitalism, either. This part of his thought was carefully elided, and "Animal Farm" became a warning against political change per se. It remains so today. The cover of the current Harcourt paperback glosses the contents as follows:

As ferociously fresh as it was more than half a century ago, "Animal Farm" is a parable about would-be liberators everywhere. As we witness the rise and bloody fall of the revolutionary animals through the lens of our own history, we see the seeds of totalitarianism in the most idealistic organizations; and in our most charismatic leaders, the souls of our cruelest oppressors.

This is the opposite of what Orwell intended. But almost everything in the

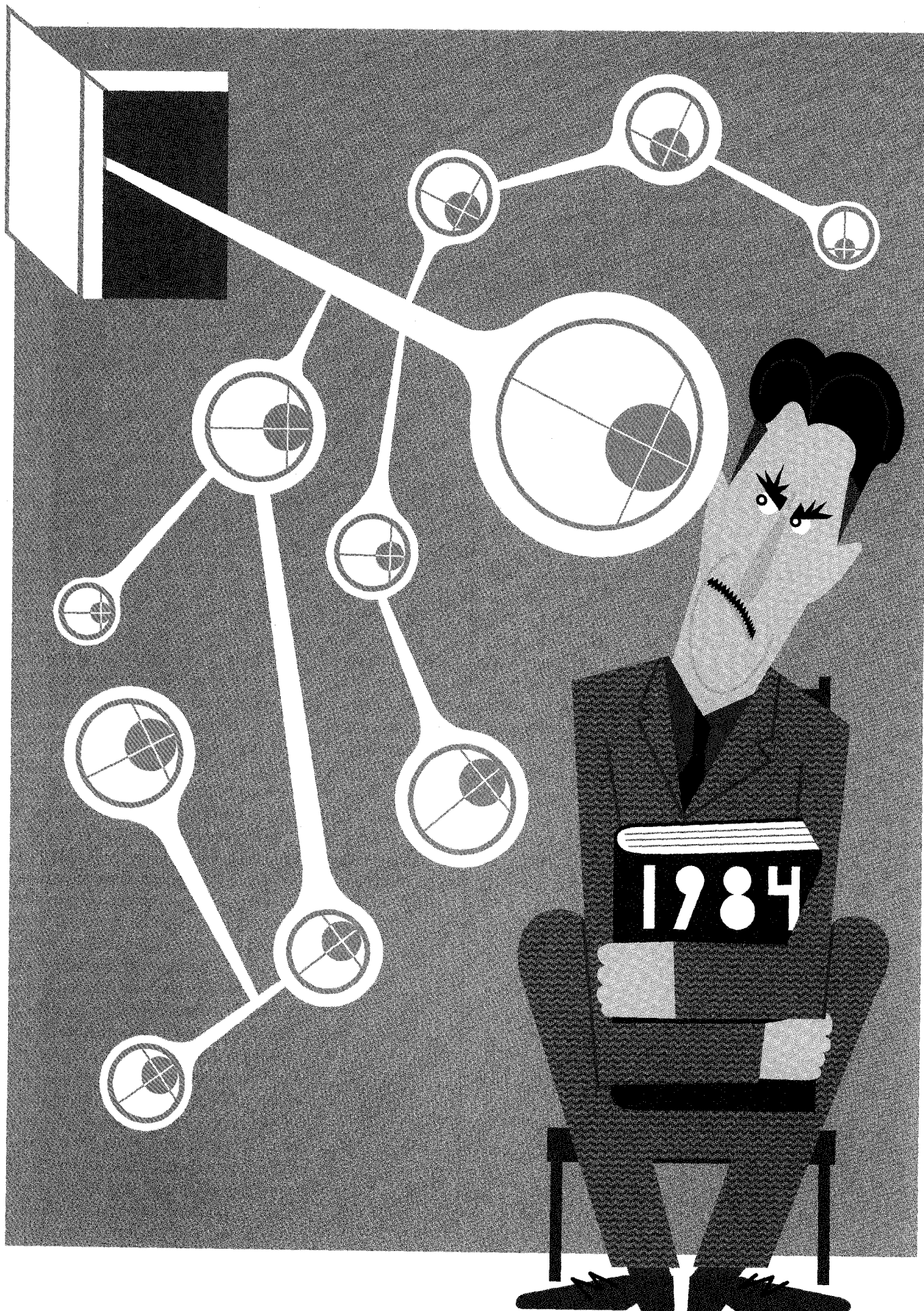
popular understanding of Orwell is a distortion of what he really thought and the kind of writer he was.

Writers are not entirely responsible for their admirers. It is unlikely that Jane Austen, if she were here today, would wish to become a member of the Jane Austen Society. In his lifetime, George Orwell was regarded, even by his friends, as a contrary man. It was said that the closer you got to him the colder and more critical he became. As a writer, he was often hardest on his allies. He was a middle-class intellectual who despised the middle class and was contemptuous of intellectuals, a Socialist whose abuse of Socialists—"all that dreary tribe of high-minded women and sandal-wearers and bearded fruit-juice drinkers who come flocking toward the smell of 'progress' like bluebottles to a dead cat"—was as vicious as any Tory's. He preached solidarity, but he had the habits of a dropout, and the works for which he is most celebrated, "Animal Farm," "1984," and the essay "Politics and the English Language," were attacks on people who purported to share his political views. He was not looking to make friends. But after his death he suddenly acquired an army of fans—all middle-class intellectuals eager to suggest that a writer who approved of little would have approved of them.

Orwell's army is one of the most ideologically mixed up ever to assemble. John Rodden, whose "George Orwell: The Politics of Literary Reputation" was published in 1989 and recently reprinted, with a new introduction (Transaction; \$30), has catalogued it exhaustively. It has included, over the years, ex-Communists, Socialists, left-wing anarchists, right-wing libertarians, liberals, conservatives, doves, hawks, the *Partisan Review* editorial board, and the John Birch Society: every group in a different uniform, but with the same button pinned to the lapel—Orwell Was Right. Irving Howe claimed Orwell, and so did Norman Podhoretz. Almost the only thing Orwell's posthumous admirers have in common, besides the button, is anti-Communism. But they all somehow found support for their particular bouquet of moral and political values in Orwell's writings, which have been universally praised as "honest," "decent," and "clear." In what

RICHARD MCGUIRE

Orwell has acquired an army of fans, all eager to suggest that a writer who approved of little would have approved of them.



sense, though, can writings that have been taken to mean so many incompatible things be called “clear”? And what, exactly, was Orwell right about?

Indifferent to his own person as Orwell genuinely was, his writing is essentially personal. He put himself at the center of all his nonfiction books and many of his essays, and he often used personal anecdotes in his political journalism to make, or reinforce, his points. He never figured himself as the hero of these stories, in part because his tendency to self-abnegation was fairly remorseless. But self-abnegation was perhaps the most seductive aspect of the persona he devised. Orwell had the rare talent for making readers feel that they were dealing not with a reporter or a columnist or a literary man—not with a writer—but with an ordinary person. His method for making people believe what he wrote was to make them believe, first of all, in him.

He was a writer, of course—he was a graphomaniac, in fact: writing was what he lived for—and there was not much that was ordinary about him. He was born, a hundred years ago, in Bengal, where his father was a sub-agent in the Opium Department of the Indian Civil Service, and he came to England when he was one, and was brought up there by his mother. (The family name was Blair, and Orwell’s given name was Eric.) Orwell’s father visited the family for three months in 1907, engaging in domestic life with sufficient industry to leave his wife pregnant, and did not come back until 1912. By then, Orwell was boarding as a

scholarship student at St. Cyprian’s, the school he wrote about, many years later, in the essay “Such, Such Were the Joys.” He studied hard and won a scholarship to Eton, and it was there that he began his career in self-denial. He deliberately slacked off, finishing a hundred and thirty-eighth in a class of a hundred and sixty-seven, and then, instead of taking the exams for university, joined the Imperial Police and went to Burma, the scene of the essays “A Hanging” and “Shooting an Elephant.” In 1927, after five years in Burma, while on leave in England and with no employment prospects, he resigned.

He spent the next four years as a tramp and an itinerant worker, experiences that became the basis for “Down and Out in Paris and London,” the first work to appear under the pen name George Orwell, in 1933. He taught school briefly, worked in a bookstore (the subject of the essay “Bookshop Memories”), and spent two months travelling around the industrial districts in the North of England gathering material for “The Road to Wigan Pier,” which came out in 1937. Orwell spent the first half of 1937 fighting with the Loyalists in Spain, where he was shot in the throat by a fascist sniper, and where he witnessed the brutal Communist suppression of the revolutionary parties in the Republican alliance. His account of these events, “Homage to Catalonia,” which appeared in 1938, was, indeed, brave and iconoclastic (though not the only work of its kind), and it established Orwell in the position that he would maintain for the rest of his life, as the leading anti-Stalinist writer of the British left.

During the war, Orwell took a job with the Indian section of the BBC’s Eastern Service, where he produced and, with T. S. Eliot, William Empson, Louis MacNeice, and other distinguished writers, delivered radio talks, mostly on literary subjects, intended to rally the support of Indians for the British war effort. For the first time since 1927, he received the salary he had once enjoyed as a policeman in Burma, but he regarded the work as propaganda—he felt, he said, like “an orange that’s been trodden on by a very dirty boot”—and, in 1943, he quit. He worked for a while as literary editor and as a columnist at the *Tribune*, a Socialist paper edited by Aneurin Bevan, the leader of the left wing of the Labour Party in Britain and a man Orwell admired. In 1946, after the success of “Animal Farm,” and knowing that he was desperately ill with lung disease, he removed himself to one of the dankest places in the British Isles: the island of Jura, off the coast of Scotland. When he was not too sick to type, he sat in a room all day smoking black shag tobacco, and writing “1984.” His biographers have noted that the life of Winston Smith at the Ministry of Truth in that novel is based in part on Orwell’s own career (as he experienced it) at the BBC. Room 101, the torture chamber in the climactic scene, was the name of the room where the Eastern Service held compulsory committee meetings. Orwell (is it necessary to say?) hated committees.

His first wife, Eileen, with whom he adopted a son, died in 1945. He proposed to several women thereafter, sometimes suggesting, as an inducement, that he would probably die soon and leave his widow with a valuable estate; but he struck out. Then, in 1949, when he really was on his deathbed, he married Sonia Brownell, a woman whose sex appeal was widely appreciated. Brownell had slept with Orwell once, in 1945, apparently from the mixed motives of pity and the desire to sleep with famous writers, one of her hobbies. The marriage was performed in a hospital room; Orwell died three months later. He ended up selling more books than any other serious writer of the twentieth century—“Animal Farm” and “1984” were together translated into more than sixty languages; in 1973, English-language editions of “1984” were still selling at a rate of 1,340 copies



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a *day*—and he left all his royalties to Sonia. She squandered them and died more or less in poverty, in 1980. Today, Orwell's gravesite, in a churchyard in Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire, is tended by volunteers.

Orwell has been posthumously psychoanalyzed, but there is no great mystery behind the choices he made in his life. He explained his motive plainly and repeatedly in his writing: he wanted to de-class himself. From his days at St. Cyprian's, and possibly even earlier, he saw the class system as a system of oppression—and nothing but a system of oppression. The guilt (his term) that he felt about his position as a member of the white imperialist bourgeoisie preceded his interest in politics as such. He spent much of his time criticizing professional Socialists, particularly the leaders of the British Labour Party, because, apart from the commitment to equality, there was not much about Socialism that was important to him. His economics were rudimentary, and he had little patience for the temporizing that ordinary politics requires. In 1945, after Germany surrendered, Churchill and the Conservatives were voted out and a Labour government came in (with Bevan as Minister of Health). In less than a year, Orwell was complaining that no steps had been taken to abolish the House of Lords.

He didn't merely go on adventures in class-crossing. He turned his life into an experiment in classlessness, and the intensity of his commitment to that experiment was the main reason that his friends and colleagues found him a perverse and sometimes exasperating man. His insistence on living in uncomfortable conditions, his refusal (despite his bad lungs) to wear a hat or coat in winter, his habit of pouring his tea into the saucer and slurping it noisily (in the working-class manner) struck his friends not as colorful eccentricities but as reproaches directed at their own bourgeois addiction to comfort and decorum. Which they were. Orwell was a brilliant and cultured man, with an Eton accent and an anomalous, vaguely French mustache, who wore the same beat-up tweed jacket nearly every day, made (very badly) his own furniture, and lived, most of the time, one step up from squalor. He read Joyce and kept a goat in the back yard.

He was completely authentic and completely inauthentic at the same time—a man who believed that to write honestly he needed to publish under a false name.

Orwell's writing is effortlessly compelling. He was in the tradition of writers who—as Leslie Stephen said of Defoe—understand that there is a literary fascination in a clear recitation of the facts. There is much more to Orwell than this, though. As Christopher Hitchens points out in "Why Orwell Matters" (Basic; \$24), a book more critical of Orwell than the title might suggest, "Homage to Catalonia" survives as a model of political journalism, and "Animal Farm" and "1984" belong permanently to the literature of resistance. Whatever uses they were made to serve in the West, they gave courage to people in the East. The territory that Orwell covered in "Down and Out in Paris and London" and "The Road to Wigan Pier"—the lower-class extremes—was by no means new to non-fiction prose. Engels wrote about it feelingly in "The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844"; Jacob Riis studied it in "How the Other Half Lives." But Orwell discovered a tone—"generous anger" is the phrase he once used to describe Dickens, and it has been applied to him, but "cool indignation" seems a little more accurate—that has retained its freshness after seventy years.

Orwell's essays have recently been collected, with exceptional thoroughness, by John Carey (Everyman; \$35). The essay on Dickens, published in 1940, is weaker criticism than Edmund Wilson's "Dickens: The Two Scrooges," which came out the same year. But Orwell's essay on Henry Miller, "Inside the Whale," which also appeared in 1940, was original and unexpected. His personal essays, especially "Shooting an Elephant" and "Such, Such Were the Joys," are models of the form. Still, his qualities as a writer are obscured by the need of his admirers to claim for his work impossible virtues.

Honesty was important to Orwell. He was certainly quick enough to accuse people he disagreed with of dishonesty. But there is sometimes a confusion, when people talk about Orwell's

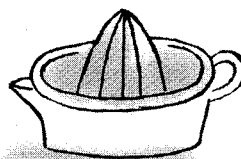
writing, between honesty and objectivity. "He said what he believed" and "He told it like it was" refer to different virtues. One of the effects of the tone Orwell achieved—the tone of a reasonable, modest, supremely undogmatic man, hoping for the best but resigned to the worst—was the impression of transparency, something that Orwell

himself, in an essay called "Why I Write," identified as the ideal of good prose. It was therefore a shock when Bernard Crick, in the first major biography of Orwell, authorized by Sonia Orwell and published

the year of her death, confessed that he had found it difficult to corroborate some of the incidents in Orwell's autobiographical writings. Jeffrey Meyers, whose biography "Orwell: Winty Conscience of a Generation" came out in 2000, concluded that Orwell sometimes "heightened reality to achieve dramatic effects."

Crick has doubts that the event Orwell recounted in remarkably fine detail in "A Hanging"—he describes the condemned man stepping aside to avoid a puddle of water on his way to the scaffold—ever happened, and Meyers notes that, during his years as a tramp, Orwell would take time off to rest and write in the homes of family and friends, something he does not mention in "Down and Out in Paris and London," where the narrator is sometimes on the verge of death by starvation. Both Crick and Meyers suspect that "Shooting an Elephant" has fabricated elements. And everything that Orwell wrote was inflected by his predilection for the worm's-eye view. When biographers asked Orwell's contemporaries what it was really like at St. Cyprian's, or in Burma, or working at the bookshop, the usual answer was "It was bad, but it wasn't *that* bad."

The point is not that Orwell made things up. The point is that he used writing in a literary, not a documentary, way: he wrote in order to make you see what he wanted you to see, to persuade. During the war, Orwell began contributing a "London Letter" to *Partisan Review*. In one letter, he wrote that park railings in London were being torn down for scrap metal, but that only working-class neighborhoods were being plundered; parks and squares in upper-class neigh-



borhoods, he reported, were untouched. The story, Crick says, was widely circulated. When a friend pointed out that it was untrue, Orwell is supposed to have replied that it didn't matter, "it was *essentially* true."

You need to grasp Orwell's premises, in other words, before you can start talking about the "truth" of what he writes. He is not saying, This is the way it objectively was from any possible point of view. He is saying, This is the way it looked to someone with my beliefs. Otherwise, his work can be puzzling. "Down and Out in Paris and London" is a powerful book, but you are always wondering what this obviously decent, well-read, talented person is doing washing dishes in the kitchen of a Paris hotel. In "The Road to Wigan Pier," Orwell gave the reader some help with this problem by explaining, at length, where he came from, what his views were, and why he went to live with the miners. Orwell was not a reporter or a sociologist. He was an advocate. He had very definite political opinions, and promoting them was his reason for writing. "No book is genuinely free of political bias," he asserted in "Why I Write." "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, *against* totalitarianism and *for* democratic Socialism, as I understand it."

Here we arrive at the challenge presented by the "Orwell Was Right" button. Hitchens says that there were three great issues in the twentieth century, and that Orwell was right on all three: imperialism, fascism, and Stalinism. What does this mean, though? Orwell was against imperialism, fascism, and Stalinism. Excellent. Many people were against them in Orwell's time, and a great many more people have been against them since. The important question, after condemning those things, was what to do about them, and how to understand the implications for the future. On this level, Orwell was almost always wrong.

Orwell thought that any Englishman who boasted of liberty and prosperity while India was still a colony was a hypocrite. "In order that England may live in comparative comfort, a hundred million Indians must live on the verge of starvation—an evil state of affairs, but you acquiesce in it every time you step into a taxi or eat a plate of strawberries and

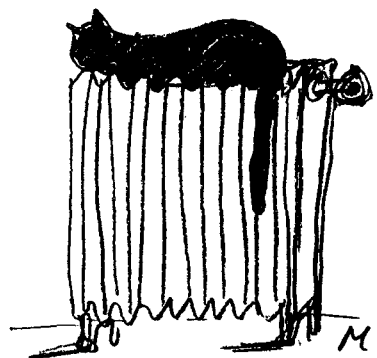
cream," he wrote in "The Road to Wigan Pier." Still, he did not believe that India was capable of complete independence, and was still saying so as late as 1943. At first, he had the idea that the British Empire should be turned into "a federation of Socialist states, like a looser and freer version of the Union of Soviet Republics," but eventually he arrived at another solution. In 1943, entering a controversy in the pages of the *Tribune* over the future of Burma, which had been invaded by Japan, he laid out his position. The notion of an independent Burma, he explained, was as ludicrous as the notion of an independent Lithuania or Luxembourg. To grant those countries independence would be to create a bunch of "comic opera states," he wrote. "The plain fact is that small nationalities *cannot* be independent, because they cannot defend themselves." The answer was to place "the whole main-land of south-east Asia, together with Formosa, under the guidance of China, while leaving the islands under an Anglo-American-Dutch condominium." Orwell was against colonial exploitation, in other words, but not in favor of national self-determination. If this is anti-imperialism, make the most of it.

Orwell took a particular dislike to Gandhi. He referred to him, in private correspondence, as a "bit of a charlatan"; in 1943, he wrote that "there is indeed a sort of apocalyptic truth in the statement of the German radio that the teachings of Hitler and Gandhi are the same." One of his last essays was on Gandhi, written two years after India, and one year after Burma, became independent, and a year after Gandhi's assassination. It is a grudging piece of writing. The method of Satyagraha, Orwell said, might have been effective against the British, but he was doubtful about its future as a tactic for political struggle. (A

few years later, Martin Luther King, Jr., would find a use for it.) He confessed to "a sort of aesthetic distaste" for Gandhi himself—Gandhi was, after all, just the sort of sandal-wearing, vegetarian mystic Orwell had always abhorred—and he attributed the success of the Indian independence movement as much to the election of a Labour government in Britain as to Gandhi's efforts. "I have never been able to feel much liking for Gandhi, but I do not feel sure that as a political thinker he was wrong in the main, nor do I believe that his life was a failure" was the most that he could bring himself to say.

Hitler, on the other hand, Orwell did find personally appealing. "I have never been able to dislike Hitler," he admitted, in 1940. Hitler, it seems, "grasped the falsity of the hedonistic attitude to life," which Orwell called the attitude of "nearly all Western thought since the last war, certainly all 'progressive' thought." This response—the idea that fascism, whatever might be wrong with it, is at least about the necessity of struggle and self-sacrifice—is not that far from the response of the relatively few people in England (there were more in France) who actively endorsed fascism.

Orwell was opposed to Nazi Germany. But he thought that Britain, as an imperial power, had no moral right to go to war against Hitler, and he was sure that a war would make Britain fascist. This is a theme in his novel "Coming Up for Air," which was published in 1939, and that winter he was urging friends to begin planning "illegal anti-war activities." He thought that it would be a good idea to set up an underground antiwar organization, in anticipation of what he called the "pre-war fascising processes," and predicted that he would end up in a British concentration camp because of his views. He kept up his antiwar agitation until August, 1939. Then, with the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, he flipped completely. In "The Lion and the Unicorn," in 1941, he accused British antiwar intellectuals of "sabotage." They had become "Europeanized"; they sneered at patriotism. (This from a man who, two years earlier, had been proposing an illegal campaign against government policy.) They had weakened the morale of the English people, "so that the Fascist nations judged that they were



'decadent' and that it was safe to plunge into war. . . . Ten years of systematic Blimp-baiting affected even the Blimps themselves and made it harder than it had been before to get intelligent young men to enter the armed forces." The prediction of a fascist Britain had evidently been forgotten.

What were Orwell's political opinions? Orwell was a revolutionary Socialist. That is, he hoped that there would be a Socialist revolution in England, and, as he said more than once, if violence was necessary, violence there should be. "I dare say the London gutters will have to run with blood," he wrote in "My Country Right or Left," in 1940. And a year later, in "The Lion and the Unicorn," "It is only by revolution that the native genius of the English people can be set free. . . . Whether it happens with or without bloodshed is largely an accident of time and place." Orwell had concluded long before that capitalism had failed unambiguously, and he never changed his opinion. He thought that Hitler's military success on the Continent proved once and for all the superiority of a planned economy. "It is not certain that Socialism is in all ways superior to capitalism, but it is certain that, unlike capitalism, it can solve the problems of production and consumption," he wrote. "The State simply calculates what goods will be needed and does its best to produce them."

A Socialist England, as Orwell described it, would be a classless society with virtually no private property. The State would own everything, and would require "that nobody shall live without working." Orwell thought that perhaps fifteen acres of land, "at the very most," might be permitted, presumably to allow subsistence farming, but that there would be no ownership of land in town areas. Incomes would be equalized, so that the highest income would never be greater than ten times the lowest. Above that, the tax rate should be a hundred per cent. The House of Lords would be abolished, though Orwell thought that the monarchy might be preserved. (Everybody would drink at the same pub, presumably, but one of the blokes would get to wear a crown.) As for its foreign policy: a Socialist state "will not have the smallest scruple about attacking hostile

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neutrals or stirring up native rebellions in enemy colonies."

Orwell was not a cultural radical. Democracy and moral decency (once the blood was cleaned off the pavement, anyway) were central to his vision of Socialism. His admirers remembered the democracy and the decency, and managed to forget most of the rest. When "Homage to Catalonia" was finally published in the United States, in 1952, Lionel Trilling wrote an introduction, which Jeffrey Meyers has called "probably the most influential essay on Orwell." It is a work of short fiction. "Orwell clung with a kind of wry, grim pride to the old ways of the last class that had ruled the old order," Trilling wrote; he exemplified the meaning of the phrase "my station and its duties," and respected "the old bourgeois virtues." He even "came to love things, material possessions." A fully housebroken anti-Communist. It is amusing to imagine Orwell slurping his tea at the Columbia Faculty House.

Understanding Orwell's politics helps to explain that largely inaccurate prediction about postwar life "1984." There was, Hitchens points out, an enormous blind spot in Orwell's view of the world: the United States. Orwell never visited the United States and, as Hitchens says, showed little curiosity about what went on there. To the extent that he gave it any attention, he tended to regard the United States as vulgar, materialistic, and a threat to the English language. ("Many Americans pronounce . . . *water* as though it had no t in it, or even as though it had no consonant in it at all, except the w," he claimed. "On the whole we are justified in regarding the American language with suspicion.") He thought that, all things considered, Britain was better off as a client-state of Washington than as a client-state of Moscow, but he did not look on an increased American role in the world with hope. Since Orwell was certain that capitalism was doomed, the only future he could imagine for the United States was as some sort of totalitarian regime.

He laid out his view in 1947, in the pages of *Partisan Review*. There were, he explained, three possible futures in a nuclear world: a preemptive nuclear strike by the United States against the Soviet Union; a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union,

wiping out most of the race and returning life to the Bronze Age; and a stable-mate created by the fear of actually using atomic bombs and other weapons of mass destruction—what would be known as the policy of mutually assured destruction. This third possibility, Orwell argued, was the worst of all:

It would mean the division of the world among two or three vast superstates, unable to conquer one another and unable to be overthrown by any internal rebellion. In all probability their structure would be hierarchic, with a semi-divine caste at the top and outright slavery at the bottom, and the crushing out of liberty would exceed anything that the world has yet seen. Within each state the necessary psychological atmosphere would be kept up by complete severance from the outer world, and by a continuous phony war against rival states. Civilizations of this type might remain static for thousands of years.

Orwell's third possibility was, of course, the path that history took. Mutually assured destruction was the guiding policy of the arms race and the Cold War. Orwell himself coined the term "Cold War," and after his death he became a hero to Cold Warriors, liberal and conservative alike. But he hated the idea of a Cold War—he preferred being bombed back to the Bronze Age—because it seems never to have entered his mind that the United States would be a force for liberty and democracy. "1984" is, precisely, Orwell's vision of what the Cold War might be like: a mindless and interminable struggle among totalitarian monsters. Was he right?

Some people in 1949 received "1984" as an attack on the Labour Party (in the book, the regime of Big Brother is said to have derived from the principles of "Ingsoc"; that is, English Socialism), and Orwell was compelled to issue, through his publisher, a statement clarifying his intentions. He was a supporter of the Labour Party, he said. "I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily *will* arrive," he continued, "but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is satire) that something resembling it *could* arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences."

The attitude behind this last sentence seems to me the regrettable part of Or-

well's legacy. If ideas were to stand or fall on the basis of their logically possible consequences, we would have no ideas, because the ultimate conceivable consequence of every idea is an absurdity—is, in some way, "against life." We don't live just by ideas. Ideas are part of the mixture of customs and practices, intuitions and instincts that make human life a conscious activity susceptible to improvement or debasement. A radical idea may be healthy as a provocation; a temperate idea may be stultifying. It depends on the circumstances. One of the most tiresome arguments against ideas is that their "tendency" is to some dire condition—to totalitarianism, or to moral relativism, or to a war of all against all. Orwell did not invent this kind of argument, but he provided, in "1984," a vocabulary for its deployment.

"Big Brother" and "doublethink" and "thought police" are frequently cited as contributions to the language. They are, but they belong to the same category as "liar" and "pervert" and "madman." They are conversation-stoppers. When a court allows videotape from a hidden camera to be used in a trial, people shout "Big Brother." When a politician refers to his proposal to permit logging on national land as "environmentally friendly," he is charged with "doublethink." When a critic finds sexism in a poem, she is accused of being a member of the "thought police." The terms can be used to discredit virtually any position, which is one of the reasons that Orwell became everyone's favorite political thinker. People learned to make any deviation from their own platform seem the first step on the slippery slope to "1984."

There are Big Brothers and thought police in the world, just as there are liars and madmen. "1984" may have been intended to expose the true character of Soviet Communism, but, because it describes a world in which there are no moral distinctions among the three fictional regimes that dominate the globe, it ended up encouraging people to see totalitarian "tendencies" everywhere. There was visible totalitarianism, in Russia and in Eastern Europe; but there was also the invisible totalitarianism of the so-called "free world." When people talk about Big Brother, they generally mean a system of covert surveillance and manipulation, oppression in demo-

cratic disguise (unlike the system in Orwell's book, which is so overt that it is advertised). "1984" taught people to imagine government as a conspiracy against liberty. This is why the John Birch Society used 1984 as the last four digits in the phone number of its Washington office.

Orwell himself was a sniffer of tendencies. He, too, could blur moral distinctions among the things he disliked, between the BBC and the Ministry of Love, for instance; he apparently thought of the Ministry of Love as the logical consequence of the mass media's "tendency" to thought control. His most celebrated conflation of dislikes is the essay, for many years a staple of the freshman-composition syllabus, "Politics and the English Language."

Orwell wrote many strong essays, but "Politics and the English Language," published in 1946, is not one of them. Half of the essay is an attack on bad prose. Orwell is against abstractions, mixed metaphors, Latinate roots, polysyllabic words, clichés, and most of the other stylistic vices identified in Fowler's "Modern English Usage" (in its fourth printing in 1946). The other half is an attack on political dishonesty. Certain political terms, Orwell argues,

are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different. Statements like *Marshal Pétain was a true patriot*, *The Soviet Press is the freest in the world*, *The Catholic Church is opposed to persecution*, are almost always made with intent to deceive.

Fowler would have found nothing to complain about, though, in the sentences Orwell objects to. They are as clear as can be. Somehow, Orwell has run together his distaste for flowery, stale prose with his distaste for fascism, Stalinism, and Roman Catholicism. He makes it seem that the problem with fascism (and the rest) is, at bottom, a problem of style. They're bad, we are encouraged to feel, because their language is bad, because they're ugly.

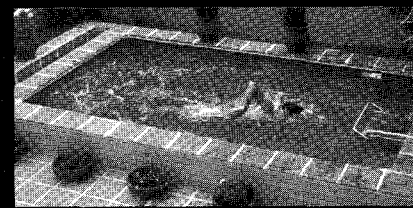
This is not an isolated instance of this way of thinking in Orwell. From his earliest work, he was obsessed with body odor, and olfactory metaphors are probably the most consistent figure in his prose, right to the end of his life, when

he congratulated Gandhi for leaving a clean smell when he died. But Orwell didn't think of the relation between smell and virtue as only metaphorical. He took quite seriously the question of whether it was ever possible to feel true solidarity with a man who smelled. Many pages in "The Road to Wigan Pier" are devoted to the problem. In his fiction, a bad character is, often, an ugly, sweaty, smelly character.

Smell has no relation to virtue, however. Ugliness has no relation to insincerity or evil, and short words with Anglo-Saxon roots have no relation to truth or goodness. Political speech, like etiquette, has its codes and its euphemisms, and Orwell is right to insist that it is important to be able to decipher them. He says that if what he calls political speech—by which he appears to mean political clichés—were translated into plain, everyday speech, confusion and insincerity would begin to evaporate. It is a worthy, if unrealistic, hope. But he does not stop there. All politics, he writes, "is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia." And by the end of the essay he has damned the whole discourse: "Political language—and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists—is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable." All political parties? Orwell had sniffed out a tendency.

Orwell's prose was so effective that it seduced many readers into imagining, mistakenly, that he was saying what they wanted him to say, and what they themselves thought. Orwell was not clairvoyant; he was not infallible; he was not even consistent. He changed his mind about things, as most writers do. He dramatized out of a desire to make the world more the way he wished it to be, as most writers do. He also said what he thought without hedging or trimming, as few writers do all the time. It is strange how selectively he was heard. It is no tribute to him to turn his books into anthems to a status quo he hated. Orwell is admired for being a paragon when he was, self-consciously, a naysayer and a misfit. If he is going to be welcomed into the pantheon of right-thinking liberals, he should at least be allowed to bring along his goat. ♦

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THE THEATRE

MEN BEHAVING BADLY

Identities lost and found on the London stage.

BY JOHN LAHR

In print, Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) was some kind of literary star; in life, he was some kind of clown. His erudition won him the company of the era's great men—Dr. Samuel Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Edmund Burke among them. But the ladies of London toasted his Irish ugliness, and a stutter robbed him of authority. He was both fumbling and funny. (Upon the death of his mother, with whom he had a fractious relationship, he dressed in half-mourning. "Oh, it was a distant relative," he explained.) "The misfortune of Goldsmith in conversation is this: he goes on without knowing how he is to get off," quipped Dr. Johnson, to whom Goldsmith dedicated his 1773 comic masterpiece "She Stoops to Conquer." By the time the play was written, English theatre had—in a reaction against the bawdry and high jinks of the Restoration—hit the Puritanical skids: the British bourgeoisie was on the rise, and so was its push for art to reflect Christian virtues. Shakespearean tragedies were furnished with happy endings; aggression in comedies was replaced with sentiment. Goldsmith, however, understood that cruelty is essential to comedy—without a killing, no feast—and "She Stoops to Conquer" proved to be just the antidote to the infection of sanctimony it attacked. "I know of no comedy for many years that has . . . answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry," Dr. Johnson said.

The comedy (revived at London's Royal National Theatre, under the vigorous direction of Max Stafford-Clark) is built around a malicious joke. Charles Marlow (Christopher Staines), an eligible scholar and man of mode, gets lost one night on his way to stay with a family friend, a genial burgher named Hardcastle (Ian Redford). Marlow is assisting his sidekick, Hastings (Stephen Beresford), in a plan to elope with an orphaned heiress, a member of the household—which also includes Hardcastle's

spoiled practical-joking stepson, Tony Lumpkin (Owen Sharpe), and his spirited daughter, Kate (Monica Dolan). As bad luck would have it, the men meet up with Lumpkin at a tavern and he directs them to Hardcastle's manor but tells them that it's an inn. "This is Liberty Hall, gentlemen," Hardcastle says, welcoming them into his home—a phrase that turns out to be truer than he knows. Hastings is soon wise to the prank, but he fails to disabuse Marlow, who goes on thinking of Hardcastle as an innkeeper. Like Goldsmith, Marlow is chronically shy—virtually paralyzed—among ladies of polite society. In his first brief, stammering encounter with Kate, he never looks at her face. When he does catch sight of her later, wearing a plain dress, he assumes that she's a barmaid.

The trope of mistaken identity allows Goldsmith to defy decorum and to explore, through comedy, the psychology of modesty. Manners insist on the appearance of sexual restraint, but Marlow's fear of exposing his desire vanishes among the lower orders, where virtue isn't an issue. When he talks to Kate as a "barmaid," he is suddenly bold. "I vow, child, you are vastly handsome," he says. "Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of a trial, of the nectar of your lips?" Kate, who knows what's going on, decides to play along, because, as she says, "I shall be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market." In a delightful inversion of romantic idealism, she gets her man by pretending to be a malaprop-prone prole, and Goldsmith, through his genial cast of flawed but warmhearted characters, exposes the thin line between respectability and rapacity.

Goldsmith subtitled his comedy "The Mistakes of a Night." Mistakes of a far more traumatic kind are the subject of Christopher Hampton's "The Talking Cure" (directed by Howard Davies, also at the Royal National), which tells the

fascinating story of Carl Jung's affair with his first analytic patient, Sabina Spielrein, a well-educated Russian eighteen-year-old whom he began treating in 1904. Spielrein went on to study with Freud, before becoming a gifted psychoanalyst herself. In the play, as she shuttles between saviors, Hampton also depicts the decline of Jung's volatile six-year relationship with Freud and his transformation from the "heir apparent of psychoanalysis" to alienated apostate.

The publication of John Kerr's "A Most Dangerous Method" and Aldo Carotenuto's "A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung and Freud" has rescued Spielrein from oblivion and brought to light her contribution to the early history of psychoanalysis. Spielrein's theory of sexuality—as the play neatly glosses it, "Suppose we think of sexuality as fusion, losing oneself . . . but losing oneself in the other, destroying one's own individuality? . . . True sexuality demands the destruction of the ego"—was, at first, rejected by Freud, who at that point had conceptualized the libido but not the death drive. Years later, though, he co-opted it, in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," earning Spielrein a grudging footnote. Her influence on Jung was more far-reaching. She was the first, if not the last, of his seduced patients to inspire his concept of the "anima"—the female soul in every man. In his old age, Jung took up stone-carving. The first panel of a triptych that he devoted to the anima shows a bear nudging a ball: "Russia gets the ball rolling," the inscription reads.

Onstage, Spielrein (well played by Jodhi May) is an almost psychotic bundle of tics and explosions of laughter and fury, prone to sadomasochistic anal-erotic fantasies about her violent father. "After he . . . when he hit us . . . afterwards . . . we had to kiss his hand," Spielrein tells Jung, who sets out to decode her hysteria. By all accounts, Jung was a magnetic personality; here, he is superbly played by Ralph Fiennes, who brings to the characterization a sense of blue-eyed alertness and compassion. Fiennes sounds only one false note: when, on a boat to the United States in 1909, Freud (Dominic Rowan) expresses his ambivalence about the trip, Jung argues, "No! America is the future." Fiennes gives the line a regrettably sour reading, which changes its meaning and is unworthy of him. Otherwise, it takes little suspension of disbelief to see him, through Spiel-



Fiennes brings a blue-eyed alertness and compassion to his performance as Carl Jung.

rein's eyes, as a kind of saintly sinner.

The story unfolds on a three-tiered stage, designed by Tim Hatley, with slats that slide open and closed; they feel like the panels of a comic book, which, in a sense, is apt for a play in which events are indicated rather than dramatized. Hampton's dialogue is more about narration than penetration: it's smart, but some gee-whizzery creeps into the exchanges. At the opening, for instance, Jung says to his long-suffering wife, Emma (Nancy Carroll), "Don't you think it's odd that, having proposed this radical therapeutic idea, Freud then lets years go by without describing any kind of methodology, not even the barest outline of his clinical procedures? What's he playing at?" What Freud understood and Jung didn't was the issue of transference. Freud, who was no picture postcard, knew that when patients fell in love with him it was a projection. He took what seemed, at first, to be a major impediment to the advancement of the new science and turned it into a potent tool. Jung, meanwhile, thought the love was real. In "The Talking Cure," however, both geniuses appear at once spectacularly brilliant and spectacularly

misguided. When Jung challenges Freud's authority, Freud feints; when Freud challenges Jung's propriety, Jung lies. "I let her become a friend," he tells Freud. "But eventually I realized she was systematically planning my seduction."

The play raises more questions than it answers: How did Jung cure Spielrein? What was his own psychological history? (Jung's mother was a hysteric—a fact that should have been revealed in the drama rather than in the program notes, and that helps explain Jung's obsession with Spielrein, as well as his success with other highly neurotic women.) "Sometimes you have to do something unforgivable, just to be able to go on living," Jung tells Spielrein at the end of the play, but "The Talking Cure" hasn't given him the inner drama to justify this urgency. Still, Hampton succeeds in conveying the pioneers' sense of wonder as they bushwhack their way through the new-found land of the unconscious. For all their mistakes and meshugaas—they weren't properly analyzed, after all—Jung and Freud were intrepid and curiously optimistic. If you don't know where you're going, I guess you can't get lost. ♦

MEN ON EDGE

"The Recruit" and "Narc."

BY DAVID DENBY

Exceptionally handsome actors may become semi-passive narcissists (Tyronne Power, the young Richard Gere) or bashful charmers (Gary Cooper, Robert Redford). Or they may become strategic hipsters, exploiting their looks while maintaining a core of reserve, even of mystery (Cary Grant, Paul Newman). And some actors, like Laurence Olivier and Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift, may transcend all categories and distinctions and re-create the art of film acting from the beginning. I have no idea where Colin Farrell, the Irish-born star of *"The Recruit"* (opening January 31st), will wind up, but, with his dark hurting eyes, the stubble on his upper lip and chin, and his slender, lithe body, he can't miss as a star, and he gives promise of cunning and resourcefulness as an actor. Like the young Mel Gibson, he jumps all over the place, yet there are suggestions of hidden wounds, of the Russell Crowe variety. In *"Minority Report,"* Farrell was an insultingly aggressive presence nipping at Tom Cruise's heels. In *"The Recruit,"* he's coiled up, but when he uncoils he moves like a big cat in pursuit of dinner. *"The Recruit,"* however, is just a preliminary vehicle for him. The movie is yet another paranoid thriller. Farrell plays James Clayton, an M.I.T. misfit recruited by the C.I.A., put through murderously difficult training, and then released into agency headquarters, in Langley, Virginia, to flush out a mole. In the early stages of the movie, I sighed twice. With the first sigh I relaxed into a rapidly paced thriller that would make no serious demands on the audience. With the second sigh I rebelled against a rapidly paced thriller that would make no serious demands on the audience. *"The Recruit"* is quick and tense, and some of it is fun, but I didn't believe a single thing in it, and the over-all effect of the movie is to make one depressed that the Christmas "art" season is over. *"The Recruit"* is no more than a well-made product of an industrial sys-

tem that's stuck in default mode most of the year. Essentially, you've seen it before.

An innocent is placed in a maze. Who can he trust and who can he not? When he was a boy, Clayton lost his father, who may also have been a C.I.A. agent. He's still a boy, allegedly brilliant but unsteady. By temperament, he's a graduate student. It may be a mark of Farrell's

him to be all-knowing, hovering everywhere, like the Holy Ghost of the intelligence world. Burke is not a man; he's a melodramatic device.

Clayton trains as a field operative at "the Farm," a mockup of the actual C.I.A. facility, presented as a cross between a prison and a Mamet-esque house of games. The recruits are asked tricky questions, pressured physically, played off against one another. They prepare for interrogation by taking lie-detector tests in which the questioners force them to reveal embarrassing secrets. There is a sexy scene in which a beautiful trainee (Bridget Moynahan) has to say whether she's attracted to Clayton. Some of this business feels like genuine field-op C.I.A. training, some of it like preposterous invention—



Al Pacino and Colin Farrell in a thriller set inside the C.I.A.

abilities that he can play a young man who is confused and off center—aggressive one second, crestfallen the next—without suggesting weakness. Clayton is commanded by a veteran agent, Walter Burke (Al Pacino), who flatters and teases him, manipulating the young man's need for fatherly approval. "You want answers. I only have secrets," Burke says. I thought Pacino was magnificent—haggard yet relentless—in *"Insomnia,"* the most underappreciated movie of last year. Here he's in domineering-satanic mode, complete with glittering eyes and an opera-house Mephistopheles goatee, and though he doesn't emit a "Hoo-hah!" he doesn't do anything new, either. He can't find much in a script that asks

a torture sequence, for instance, in which the hero is beaten by grinning bald meatheads and then assaulted with red-hot electrodes. The director, the Australian-born Roger Donaldson, has always been an extremely competent craftsman, but he doesn't have the wit to jazz up a bad script, and when he has hapless material like *"Cocktail"* and *"White Sands"* he plugs along gamely and sinks. Here, he can't hide the unfortunate impression that the recruits are training less for intelligence work than for action movies. Given all the new threats we face, you would think that moviemakers would have the sense to stick to the facts and involve us in realistic intrigues. But the only deeply felt emotion in *"The Re-*

ROBERT RISCO

cruit" is paranoia, which, I'm beginning to think, shows up so often in thrillers because it's the dominant emotion of people in the movie colony. What they fear, of course, is failure, so they make bankable but unadventurous movies like this one—which, as often as not, immediately fail. I believe there's an irony there, if you're in the mood for one.

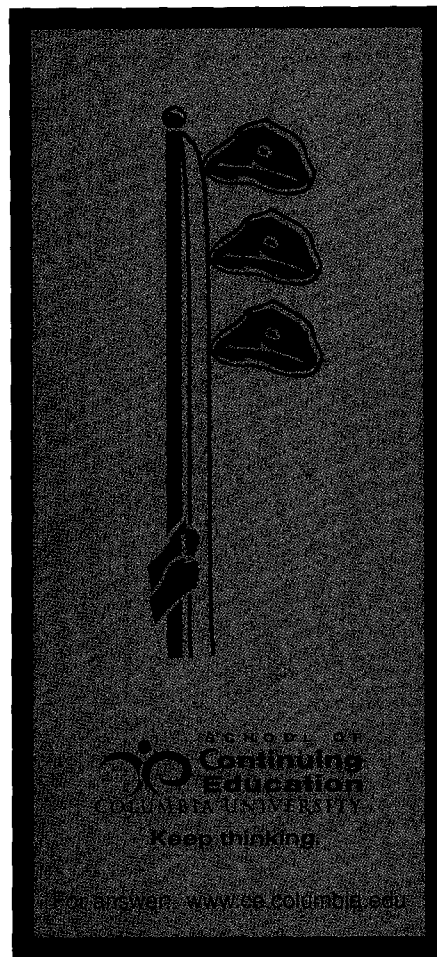
No one could mistake "Narc," which reinvents cinematic naturalism, for a standard Hollywood product. Of all the hard-assed, violent, grainy-looking urban thrillers I've seen in my life, "Narc" is perhaps the most turbulent—and also one of the most soulful and touching. The young director, Joe Carnahan, wants to impress us with the intractability of our life on this earth. When a young cop and his wife shout at each other, their frightened baby bawls through the fight, drowning out half the lines. Carnahan could have looped the dialogue and then adjusted the sound mix so we could have heard everything, but obviously the meaning of the scene for him included the child's howls, an aspect of family life that holds husband and wife together, whatever their quarrels, like glue. Dedicated to an aesthetic of disorder and rage, "Narc" nevertheless has a gentle heart. Many of the scenes play out at the edge and then go over the edge—the wives crack and break into tears, the men slip into self-justifying rants. Junkies are incoherent and terrified; cops boil over with frustration. "Narc" has a violent sincerity akin to the best of punk and grunge rock and a purity that is virtually unknown in recent movies. Thirty years ago, John Cassavetes searched for emotional truth by challenging his actors to improvise around vaguely designed situations, but his method produced so much repetition and banality that audiences became half frantic with boredom. Apart from the family scenes (which are integral to the movie's themes), Carnahan dramatizes the most chaotic and dangerous side of police work, so boredom is hardly a threat. At the beginning of the movie, Nick Tellis (Jason Patric), a Detroit narc working undercover among druggies, bursts out of a house like a bul-

let from a pistol, chasing after a dealer, and the camera, taking his point of view, races along with him, jiggling and shaking and tripping. The effect is literally breathtaking—your respiration doesn't return to normal until the sequence ends.

Tellis, who goes from extreme violence to haunted silence, is a career loser. He gets thrown off the force, but is brought back to help solve a mysterious case: another undercover cop has been murdered. He links up with the dead man's partner, the rogue cop Henry Oak (Ray Liotta), and they pursue the loose ends of the case through freezing streets and into unspeakably sordid hideaways. Different versions of the murder emerge, and we see each of them enacted in a tunnel under a causeway while a cold, dark rain falls outside. The movie is half downbeat police procedural, half "Rashomon," half existential drama. That makes three halves, but this is an ambitious picture that recognizes no limits. Tellis needs to find not only the truth of the crime but his own truth: Can he pull himself together or not? As a narc, he once fell into drug use, yet his life has no meaning without dangerous work. Jason Patric, who has never settled into the starring career he seems marked for, speaks with the exaggerated calm of a man trying to survive at the eye of a storm. Tellis is quiet and confiding, but his voice takes on a taunting edge when he deals with the junkies who once almost engulfed him. Oak, the older man, is fuelled by a semi-psychotic righteousness—he's a protector of women and children—and Ray Liotta, armored with a thick beard and a heavy new gut, makes him a terrifying figure. Oak is perhaps the most articulate and sympathetic of the many out-of-control cops who have populated the movies over the past few decades; he's also the most threatening. These two men are just barely holding on to sanity and to the tender family feelings that they think redeem their violence. "Narc" is a blood-soaked, hellish experience—a midnight special for lovers of a violent genre—yet it has been made with a mixture of ferocity and sweetness which leaves one exhausted but at peace. ♦

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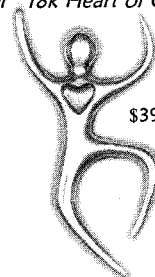
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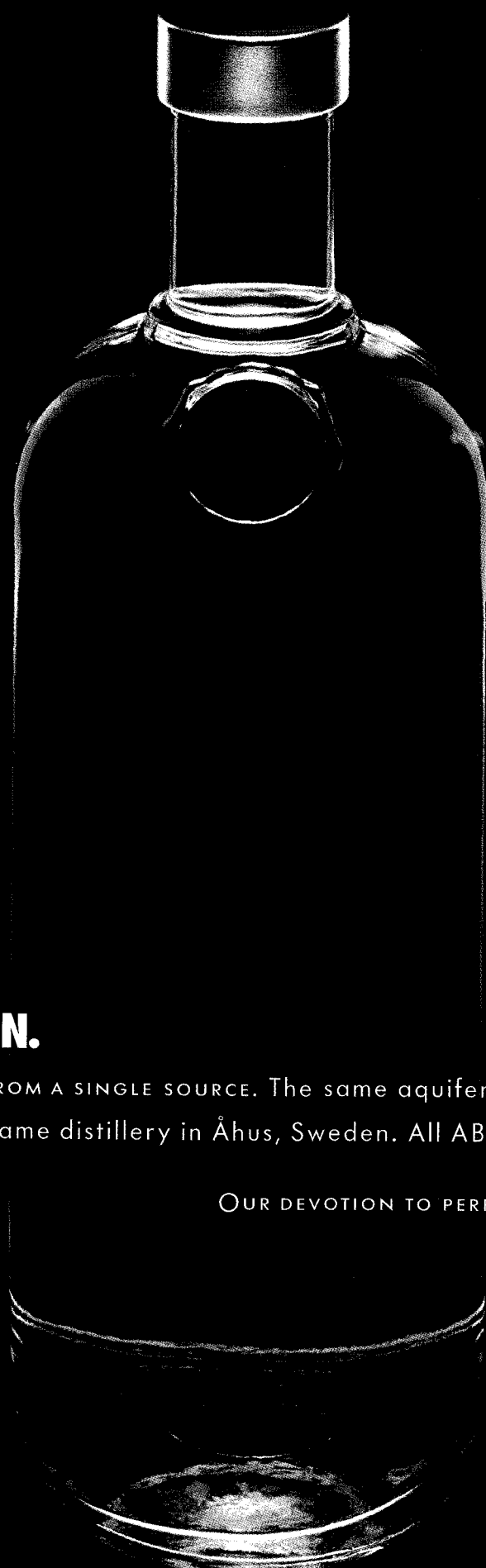


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